

TOTTENHAM SYSTEM OF OFFICE PROCEDURE & MANAGEMENT

INTRODUCTION :

This Module is divided into 3(three) Units namely:

- 1: Office and Office System
- 2: Salient Features of Tottenham system
- 3: General discipline

The above Units have been further divided into sub units depending on the contents being discussed. In these, we will be discussing the following:

- What is an Office
- What is a System
- Why we need a System in office
- Duties and responsibilities of
 - o Section Heads
 - o Dealing Assistants
- Various Registers to be maintained
- Discipline

OFFICE AND OFFICE SYSTEM

Introduction:

Every one of us, even children (say, 3 or 4 years), in our day-to-day life use the words office & system in various contexts. In fact we are working in Government offices and we will discuss in this unit what is an office, why do we need a system and how it helps in our day to day office administration.

Definition of an Office:

Almost in every house the real drama will start from the early morning, say, at 7.00 am onwards or even early that children may shout that Mummy! Where are my shoes? Where are my socks? I am to go to school or college. Please get ready my lunch box. At the same time, you may also ask for arrangements for you to go to “**office**”. If both are employees, she may seek your support in making arrangements. You might have done similarly the way children were shouting when you were in your childhood. That means we will be hearing the term “Office” right from childhood. Children may use the word “office” with out having proper understanding of the word. The children will only know that their father/mother went to office where they work.

But you will be knowing more about the term Office. Before you go for further reading, please jot down in the box given below what you think is an office? This would help you in a better understanding of the issues that are being discussed in this unit.

You have noted down some points. Interestingly, most people continue to define an “Office” as a workplace where people perform a series of activities for achieving the organizational goals/objectives. For example, “we both are working in the side by side offices”. “My office is very close to my husband’s office”. Office is also used to refer to the people who work there. for example, “the whole office knows that you got promotion”. Or “Boss is going on leave for next two weeks”. Here office refers to the people working there. More interestingly, a mother who is a housewife is also working; but we do not say that she is working in an office. Why? Because she does not get “paid” for her services.

You may therefore, add that the organization pays its employees a salary. That is, work is done in an office for monetary considerations. You may consider that this completes the definition of an office. While this is partly true, this definition does not give us the complete picture. Office may also refer to an important job or position of authority in Government or in an organization. For example, “the Chairperson of the Institute holds the office for one year” or “the office of the President of the society is an honorary one”. Here, office refers to the position held.

One of your friends could be working in a factory. Another friend could be a farmer who would be working in the field. When you apply the definition of office you have in mind at this stage to these situations you may find it odd to say that they work in an office. Some of us may even say that a person who works in the field or a farm does not work in an office. Similarly, you may say that a person who works in the factory does not work in an office. If you think a little deeper, you may say that the definition of office excludes manual work. You would appreciate that a complete definition of office has still not emerged.

You may like to try to define office from a different angle. Do you agree that you work in an office? The chances are that you would say “yes”. In that case, let us see what you do in an office. Most of you may be receiving communications, recording them somewhere or may be filing them. In general, what you do in an office is something relating to paperwork. But it is not the paper you are dealing with; it is “something” that paper contains. What is that “something”?

If you did not get a satisfactory reply, consider the issue from yet another angle. An organization is set up with specific goals/objectives. Whichever organization you work with, you do work to achieve the organizational goals/objectives. To achieve these, frequently, various decisions are taken by people who are authorized to decide, as and when the clientele group approaches them.

Let us now see what are the various means through which the clientele can approach people who decide. In a small organization, like a private sector office, the clients can directly reach the decision maker. As the organization grows there would be intermediaries, primarily to let the decision maker concentrate only on major issues. People working under them could decide the smaller issues. As the organization grows further or in most Government offices, there could be officers and an office. Those in the office do the necessary preparatory work to let the officers take decisions. These preparatory works would include dealing with “something” which the paper contains.

This could either be facts or figures or diagrams or codes or even maps. Basically, these are information. The information is processed so that persons who are authorized could take decisions. (We generally call them as the “competent authorities”). From functional point of view, we may now define an “Office” as “**Information Processing Center**”. (If you are a computer literate you may slightly differ on the use of the words ‘information’. You may prefer to use word data, instead!). We have already seen that the reason why information is processed is to take decisions to achieve organizational goals.

You have seen that the term ‘office’ is used in different context. Therefore, there are different ways of defining ‘Office’. One of the most common definitions is from the geographical point of view. Another refers to people working there. Yet another is from the point of view of the position held. These are normally the definitions from the common man point of view. For someone concerned with office management, from the functional point of view. Hence, the most appropriate one may be in terms of processing of information, since all offices are collecting data, processing it, taking decisions, communicating and storing the information.

One of the definitions of ‘office’ could be that an Office is a work place where teams of people work together, mostly in a hierarchy. People are paid for their efforts by the organization. An office is a kind of control tower where information is processed to facilitate a competent authority to take decisions to achieve organizational goals.

SYSTEM:

What is a System?

From the above experiences, we understood that there should not be any ambiguity either in carrying out any activity or in the roles and responsibilities. Everyone expects that things should happen in an office as routine on the basis of certain prescribed procedures or norms without waiting for any individual. In fact, a system is very much required for smooth and effective functioning of an office.

Think of a situation in your house. How, since morning, will you prepare your self to go to office? Don't you follow a routine in this regard? Definitely "Yes".

When you go to a bank for withdrawing money, a certain procedure is followed in the bank. Even in your office, you follow a specified procedure in processing the information till a decision is taken and communicated to the concerned. Also, you are having a clear job and responsibilities to be carried out in the day-to-day administration.

In government offices the procedure to be followed is prescribed by rules. From all the above, simply, we can define a **"System" as "doing the things methodically by following certain procedures laid down with a clearly defined roles and responsibilities for smooth and effective functioning of the office"**.

Common Office Functions:

Now, let us have a look at the office functions. "Function" here refers to the activities you perform in office, irrespective of the kind of work assigned to you. In other words, whether you work in administration section or accounts section or any other section, you all perform "some" common office functions. Would you like to list these common office functions? Remember that all you have to do is think of those activities you would perform irrespective of the section you are working in. Record your points in the box given below:

We are in the process of learning what office functions are. Therefore, what you have listed would be something to do with information because it is an information-processing center. The first of these functions would be to **collect information**. You may do so by voice communication, that is over telephone or you may walk across and get it orally or someone may pass on information personally or you would in most of the occasions get it through some written communication.

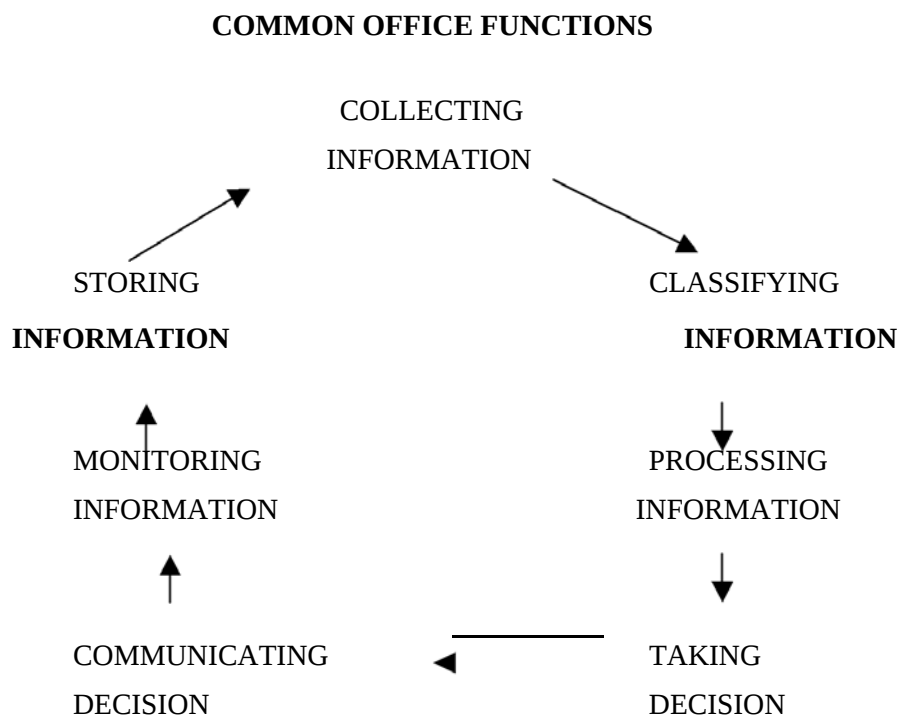
Once you start collecting information, you would like to keep them in such a manner that you are able to retrieve it when it is time to take a decision. For this purpose, you have to **classify the information**. Classification of information means putting papers containing information in files in such a way that you know which file to look for when you need the information. For example, if you are in administration section you may keep papers relating to appointment of directly recruited clerks in one file and representations received from the section head/superintendents regarding their seniority in another folder. Similarly, if you are working in cash section, you may keep papers seeking advance to celebrate festivals in one file and so on. One of the mechanisms you most commonly use in office to perform this function is through filing of information.

The next function after you have filed the receipts is to **process information**. Processing is the act of bringing all the relevant **facts** at one place, apply the relevant rules or guidelines or quote precedent to enable the competent authority to take decisions. The tool used to achieve this purpose is "Noting" Noting is a process of recording a note. A note is nothing but written remarks on a case recorded by the competent authority after examining the case with reference to the relevant rules, regulations or precedents and to **take decisions**. After the competent authority has taken the decision, it will have to be communicated to the person(s) concerned for implementation. Therefore, the next function is **communication of decision or the desired information**. Unless the decision is conveyed to the party concerned it

cannot be carried out. The tool found useful to perform this function is called “Drafting”.

The next function is **monitoring the progress**. This is an area that needs greater attention, particularly, in government offices. Monitoring helps the conveyor of the decision whether it has been implemented in the manner the conveyor desired. The tools used to perform this function are “Reports” and “Returns” obtained on an annual, half -yearly, quarterly, monthly or fortnightly basis. One must, however, resist the temptation to call for too many “Reports” and “Returns”. In such cases, the task of analyzing the data received becomes difficult. In fact, too many “Reports” and “Returns” may lead to situations where calling for such “Reports” and “Returns” may become a ritual defeating the very purpose. You must, therefore, review the need for the “Reports” and “Returns” at regular intervals.

After you receive a feedback that the decision has been implemented, you have to ensure whether action on the case is complete. If it is, you need **to store this information** for future use. The principles of record management are the tools that are to be adopted to perform this function. If there is a need in future, to use the stored information, they are retrieved. If necessary, such retrieved information are updated by collecting the latest information and used again. The cycle thus, keeps on going the various functions performed in an office could be schematically presented in the following manner:



The general/common office functions are:

1. Collection of Information: Information will be collected either by orally or through written communication form.
2. Classify the Information: The information collected will have to be classified according to subject area and put into different files which helps us to retrieve any specific paper as and when required.
3. Processing of Information is nothing but bringing all relevant papers/facts/information relating to specific area/subject at one place and put up to the competent authority to facilitate to take a decision.
4. Communication of Decisions: Once a decision is taken on any issue/ activity, the decision will be communicated to the concerned people/organisation.

5. Monitoring the Progress: This is one of the very important functions of an office and needs more attention. We have to follow up our communication to get the required information or reports or returns. This should be done periodically.
6. Storing the Information: This broadly refers to “record management”.

INTRODUCTION

Sir Richard Tottenham was a British ICS officer who worked as District Collector of North Arcot District in pre independent India. North Arcot is a district in the State of Tamilnadu now. The district of Chittoor was a part of North Arcot in those days. You can see some details in this regard if you happen to visit the District Collector’s office in Chittoor. The office system developed by Sir Richard Tottenham is being called in his name as “Tottenham System of office procedure”.

ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE OF OFFICE

You might have studied in your college that the present system of administration is called Bureaucracy, which is also called Desk Government and it is blamed for all the evils of delays and red tapism. The salient features of bureaucracy are:

1. Hierarchy
2. Following Rules and Procedures
3. Written Documents
4. Impersonal Order

Bureaucracy aims at rational or impersonal Government because all the decisions are taken based on rules and regulations on written documents.

Tottenham system is based on the principles of Bureaucracy. The first step in the system is to divide the office in to various sections. In this system the office appears like a pyramid. The Management head will be at the top and the cutting edge level functionaries will be at the bottom of the pyramid.

Depending on the size and functions of the office, the nomenclature will be different. It may be Commissioner or Director or District Collector who will be at the top level. The common feature you might have noticed is whether it is a State Headquarter or District or Divisional or Mandal Headquarter, there will be an officer on the top of the pyramid, which becomes large at the base. Different levels of functionaries are working in a hierarchy. It is the same with the office where you are now working.

SECTIONS:

You have observed in the organisational structure discussed above that the office is divided in to “Sections”. You are hearing this term “Section” everyday.

Simply, “Section” means a small part. The organisation (Office) is divided into several sections for administrative convenience. Each “section” deals with specific assigned activities of the organisation. For example; Establishment section deals with all service and establishment matters; Accounts Section deals with all money matters of the organisation; fair copying section deals with all typing related work etc.

That means, in Government administration, every office is divided in to various sections depending on the activities/functions of the office. These functions are allotted to the sections.

Dividing into sections and allotting the functions to each section will alone not sufficient. Personnel are required to work in the sections to process the information. Hence depending on the strength of the employees, some employees will be posted in each section clearly defining their roles and responsibilities for processing the papers/information relating to the section.

Normally a Section consists the following personnel: 1. Section head or superintendent, Four or Five Senior/Junior Assistants Typist

You may wonder why 4-5 people are under the control of each section head. This is based on the principle of 'Span of Control'. You can see from the top person in the pyramid to the section head, under each officer 4-5 subordinate officers are working. This doesn't mean that the head of the department is not having control on all the other subordinates. But, four or five people are made responsible of particular activities and they come in direct contact and others generally through them. Is it not so in your office? Effective supervision and monitoring is expected to be possible on limited number of persons only.

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER:

You may be aware the present Administrative Officer till recently in District Collectorate used to be called as Shiristadar in Andhra Area and as Revenue Assistant in Telangana area of the State. In every department you may notice that the administrative functions are entrusted to either an Administrative officer or a Joint/Deputy /Assistant Director or Commissioner. In small offices in district or mandals and other places the person who deals with administrative functions be treated as administrative officer.

DUTIES OF SECTION HEADS:

The section head is being called as superintendent or section officer or supervisor. Whatever name is used you may notice similar functions are entrusted to the section head. It is said that the Supervisor should not only 'supervise', he/she should be 'Super wise' and have 'super vision' in discharging his/her functions.

- i. You have listed out some functions of your supervisor.
- ii. Let us list the functions of a "Supervisor": -
- iii. Exercise overall control and supervision over the section and employees working in the concerned section
- iv. Review of the currents and mark to the concerned dealing assistant for appropriate action and give proper direction to the concerned assistant on the endorsement, if any,
- v. made by the officers
- vi. Scrutinize the papers/files thoroughly before sending to the higher authorities for decision
- vii. Closely monitor whether the approved letters/communications are despatched properly in time
- viii. Check various registers maintained by dealing assistants periodically to ensure that they are maintained properly
- ix. Oversee the maintenance of files and suggest for improvement
- x. Check the Personal Registers maintained by the
- xi. concerned assistants periodically to arrest the delays in processing of papers
- xii. Ensures discipline in the section
- xiii. Maintain the attendance register and mark late attendance, if any
- xiv. Support and suggest the higher authorities for smooth and effective functioning of the office

That means, the 'Supervisor' (Section Head) is having greater role in the office and is expected to Control; Manage; and Supervise the activities of the section as well as the employees working in the section for effective and efficient functioning.

He should also be able to guide the employees what to do; how to do; and demonstrate, where ever necessary. He should be available and accessible to his/her staff in the section. Simply to say, *"he/she should be the "role model" to the employees working in his/her section"*.

Duties of Assistants:

You have a clear idea about what a Superintendent/Supervisor is expected to do in an office. Then what is the role of an

Assistant in the section?

Now let us list out:

- i. Follow the instructions of the supervisor in conduct of office business
- ii. Acknowledge the receipt of the currents
- iii. Enter the currents in the Personal Register immediately after receipt and fill the relevant columns as and when action is taken
- iv. Put up the papers, normally, within three days of their receipt or as ordered
- v. Put up DO letters and other urgent communications within 24 hours of their receipt or as per directions of the superior officers
- vi. Prompt submission of drafts as and when files are received
- vii. Timely fair copying and despatch of the letters
- viii. Put up reminders at regular intervals as prescribed and maintain Reminder Dairy
- ix. Maintain and update Periodical Register and submit the periodicals with required information in time
- x. Close the files as per the prescribed procedure as and when action is not required in that file and send them to “Record Room”
- xi. Prepare index slips before sending the disposal to record room
- xii. Maintain Stock File(s)
- xiii. Prepare monthly arrear list and submit for check to the section head and other officers along with other registers (PR, Pdl. Reg., SF etc. as per time schedule)
- xiv. Take appropriate action suggested by the superiors in the run on note within 24 hours
- xv. Not divulge any official secrets

Registers to be Maintained:

Tottenham system prescribes various Registers to monitor the progress of work in the office. These Registers will help not only to watch the progress but also arrest the delays and cut down the arrears.

1. Inward Register
2. Distribution Register
3. Personal Register
4. Security Register
5. Register for Despatch by Local Delivery
6. Register of Stamp Account
7. Periodical Register

Inward Register:

All tappals received in an office, after the Head of the office sees them, will be entered in the “Inward Register”.

It is maintained for a calendar year. Continuous serial number is given starting from 1st January to 31st December of each year. The tappal once entered in this register with a serial number is called a “Current”.

You might have seen different practices exist in different offices. In many offices signature of the Assistant receiving the currents is obtained as an acknowledgement in the same Inward Register.

Distribution Register:

This is also in practice that the currents are separated section wise and distributed to each section through a “Distribution Register” and Acknowledgement from the concerned Assistant is taken in the register.

Personal Register: (PR)

You are aware that every Dealing Assistant (Junior/Senior assistant) will have to maintain a Personal Register. Two types of Registers are maintained in government offices. In Heads of Departments and State Secretariat, the PR contains 15 columns. Where as the PR maintained in District and other offices contains 10 columns.

The difference is that columns 4,5,&6 of the PR maintained in the offices of HODs dealing with “Title; from whom; & out side No. & Date” are clubbed into one column ie., column No. 4 in the PR maintained in the subordinate offices. Similarly columns 9,10,&11 are clubbed into one column No. 8 of PR maintained in subordinate offices.

All currents received will have to be entered in the PR by each Dealing Assistant. *Remember that Personal Register is one of the most important Registers to be maintained by each and every Dealing Assistant without any exception.*

Security Register:

The title of the register itself is communicating the purpose of maintaining this Register. All valuables, such as, Cheques, Demand Drafts and valuables received in the office are entered in this Register instead of Inward Register.

Stamp Account:

In case of the letters to be sent to places out side the place where your office is located, you have to send them by “Post” for which postal stamps to be pasted. That means, sending by post involves money. Please remember and make it a point that when ever money is involved in any transaction, you should take adequate precautions for proper accounting. Further details on this subject will be discussed in the Module 4.

Periodical Register:

Any Report/Return, which is to be sent at regular intervals, is called as Periodical Register/Return. To monitor this activity, a “Periodical Register” will be maintained in every office in which the details about all the periodicals, their receipt and the date of sending etc., will be entered. You must note that:

1. No current numbers are given to the papers received in respect of periodicals
2. A Periodical Register is maintained for each year starting from 1st January to 31st December.
3. Continuous serial numbers are given to all periodicals
4. Every Dealing Assistant will maintain a Periodical Register in respect of periodicals dealt in his/her seat.
5. The dates of incoming periodicals and out going periodicals are to be entered in to the register.
6. Every Dealing Assistant should take adequate care for timely sending of the out going periodicals and also to obtain in coming periodicals.

GENERAL DISCIPLINE

Introduction:

Do you remember the question put at the end of Unit 2? Though a system, which is time tested and foolproof, is prescribed, we will not be getting the required results unless persons implementing the system are

Office hours:

You are aware that the office hours presently are from 9.00 am. to 5.30 pm. except on holidays declared by the Govt. There is time provided for lunch break of half an hour between 1.00pm to 1.30 pm. Think for a minute for whom these timings are meant for? You may say that the timings are for the employees to attend office. Govt Service is a full time employment, that means 24 hrs we are at the disposal of the Government. Secondly the conduct rules prohibit a government employee of taking any private employment after the officer hours.

Here, every one must remember the saying of Mahatma Gandhi. It reads out as follows:

“The customer/public is the most important visitor in our premises. We are not doing any favour to him by attending on him. He is doing a favour to us by providing opportunity to attend on him”

General Discipline

Normally you see that we expect a lot of discipline from our children. Will it not apply to us? However the General Discipline prescribed in the District Office Manual refers to:

1. Quiet & dignified behaviour
2. Courteousness
3. No wastage of time
4. Perfect silence
5. Promptness
6. Punctuality
7. Regular attendance
8. Obedience
9. Non acceptance of presents/gifts/remuneration
10. Tidiness & cleanliness

DISCIPLINE

The dictionary meaning for “Discipline” is of a particular situation or activity is the necessity of acting in a strictly controlled way according to a set of expected rules or standards that this activity or situation involves. We are sure that many of the above items are listed by you. However we would like to discuss them one after the other.

1) Quite & Dignified behaviour

You might have seen in some offices employees talking, shouting & quarrelling among themselves. What impression it gives to a visitor who visits the office? How the other employees can do their work if some are disturbing them? As public servant the first thing you should note is that one should be quiet in the office doing his/her own work and should not disturb others. The dignity of the organisation depends on how we behave.

2) Courteousness

You should not only be courteous with your colleagues (both superior & subordinate) but also with the **public visiting our office. In fact you should be more courteous with the public/customer Remember you are a Government Servant.**

3) No wastage of time

You might have noticed that whenever you visit some office, people may be spending their time doing work, talking to each other or reading magazines etc. The first one is what is needed. Second one is only wastage of time, because of which you may not be able to take timely action in an important matter!

4) Perfect Silence

We have discussed above

5) Promptness

The dictionary meaning is “done immediately and without any delay”. You think of the situation discussed at 3 above and relate to this

6) Punctuality

The dictionary meaning is “arriving at same place or doing something at exactly the right time”

You please think of the difference between prompt & punctual. We normally hear that “some one is a very good worker if he/she comes. But rarely comes in time”; also “regularly irregular” etc. what does this mean. It is some thing like “doing the right things at the right time” you should also remember that promptness, punctuality are most important qualities by which you will be rated.

7) Regular Attendance

We have just discussed about this above.

8) Obedience

The dictionary meaning says “behaviour when you do what someone asks or tells you to do especially some one in authority. You may recall the APCS (conduct) rules, which says, “An employee will exercise best judgement in performance of official duties except when he/she is acting under a direction from his/her official superior”. It

means that when a superior officer gives a direction/order it should be obeyed. Disobedience will be treated as indiscipline.

09) Non acceptance of Presents/gifts/remuneration

We would like to draw your attention to a situation where you are forced to enter into a public transport fully crowded and no place to stand. If someone sitting shares his/her seat, generally we accept isn't it? Think the same person after sometime came to your seat. In fact he/she was coming to your office on a particular work. You look after the subject. After reaching the place of work he/she could find out the information & reached your seat. What would be your reaction? Somewhat favourable or not? Why favourable? Because, the person offered to share the seat.

Now think of a situation where a person not a relative, not a friend & no occasion gives a gift etc. try to catch the emotive. The APCS (conduct) rules allows you to accept a gift the value of which should not exceed Rs. 200/- from a near relative/friend on ceremonial occasions. Remember this.

10.) Tidiness & cleanliness

Any one who visits the office first see the surroundings, then office building and then only you. If the office is not tidy & clean it gives a bad opinion about the staff and their capacity to work. Secondly unclean offices are tend to cause ill health to us. That is why it is said, "cleanliness is next to godliness". Hence you are required to keep your seat & papers tidy & at least your surroundings clean.

At this stage we would like to ask you a question. Are you ready? If the traffic rules we do not follow on the road. What happens?

Yes, the possibility of meeting an accident. If we are not disciplined there is every possibility of meeting an accident or unwanted situation in office. Hence we suggest you to be careful in this regard.

TAPPALS AND FILE MANAGEMENT

Introduction

We have discussed about why & what of 'office' and 'system' and the common office functions. In Unit 2 we have discussed the Tottenham system and its salient features. At the end of the module, in Unit 3, general discipline expected of a public servant in an office was discussed.

Now we should go deep into each of the common office functions and know about them. As you are aware any office do the work of processing the information. Information processing again starts with receipt of information, isn't it? Do you know how information is received in an office? Yes, by way of letters etc. All communications, which pass on some information, are called tappals, as per Tottenham system.

Once tappals are received in an office they should be disposed properly i.e. reply should be communicated to the sender of the tappal. The action that is taken to send a reply is processing information. To process the information a file is managed.

The present module 2 deals with **Tappals and File Management**

The module is divided into the following 3 units

- 1: Receipts and distribution of tappals
- 2: Maintenance of Personal Register (PR)
- 3: File Management

You have already seen in module 1 that units are further divided into sub units. Same thing here also. You may ask questions now. The introduction says about Tappals and file management but Unit 2 says about PR why? It is because this is the way it is to be worked. The details we will see now.

- Tappals

-Ordinary -Urgent

- **Receipt of tappal**
- **Perusal by officer**
- **Entry in Inward register/ Security register**
- **Distribution of Tappals**
- **Registry in PR**
- **File Management**
 - Note file -Current file
 - Flagging -Referencing
 - Linking

RECEIPT AND DISTRIBUTION OF TAPPALS

INTRODUCTION

Everyone of us visit post office in our day to day life for purchasing cards or stamps or for sending money order or registered letters or in some other context. You would have seen in almost all central places and at the entrance of the post office a post box where you can post your letters. Post office is also generally called Tappal Office. You are well aware that the main function of the post office is to receive letters, sort them and send/ distribute them to the concerned.

In Government offices also similar to a post office, letters or communications are received, sorted out and distributed to the concerned

dealing assistants. In big offices where the strength is more, a separate section may be looking after this actively. In small offices a clerk/Assistant may be entrusted with this work. In very small office where there is only one assistant he/she has to attend to the receipt of communications also besides other work.

We are discussing about receipt of communications. You might be wondering why all this?

You are aware that in Government offices also large number of communications are received. All such communications are termed as

Tappal

OBJECTIVES:

On completion of this unit, you will be able to

- * Describe the procedure involved in Receipts & Opening of tappal
- List out the instances where tappal need not be entered in the Inward Register
- * Describe the distribution process of tappals and its significance **TAPPALS**

We have already mentioned that all communications received in an office are called tappals. The communications may be in the form of memos, letters, DO letters, proceedings, GOs etc received either from government i.e. Secretariat or other government offices or common public. The tappal is generally received in two ways:

- i) Either by messenger from local offices or public who visit our office or
- ii) By post.

- **Tappal** refers to all written communications received in an office. Examples of Tappal include letter, telegram, file etc. received either by post, special messenger or by other means like the telex, fax , e mail etc.

Receipt of Tappals

The tappal clerk in an office receives tappal in the tappal section. Normally, when we write a letter to any person, by name. However, in the official style of communication, the letters are normally addressed by designations except in few cases. In such situations, letters received addressing the Head of Office or senior

most officers in the organization by designation will first reach the tappal section. The concerned functionary in tappal section would send it to the officer concerned.

We generally call the tappal section as Inward section. In many offices, the inward and outward i.e. sending letters to other offices is being dealt in one section generally called as Inward and Outward section. The tappal clerk is called as inward clerk. It is the responsibility of the Head of the office to issue proper orders entrusting the inward/tappal work. Irrespective of the size of office, proper office order should be there entrusting the work.

Confidential tappals

By this you refer to tappals bearing security grading. Security grading means tappals with markings like confidential, Secret and top secret etc.

Urgent Tappal

It means tappals marked as immediate, Top priority. You may like to note that there are only two types of urgency grading in govt. Others like most immediate, urgent, most urgent, today etc are not to be used. The reason why there are only two urgency grading is that having too many grading would necessitate their own inter se urgency. More difficult part is to remember the inter se urgency grading.

Care to be taken

Whenever a communication is received locally, the tappal/inward assistant affixing the office seal and date should acknowledge it. Whenever he/she receives letters from the postman they should be verified to the correctness of the address and if any letters of other offices are delivered wrongly they should be returned to the postman

Perusal by officer

Previously there used to be an inward box duly locked in all offices. The duty of the tappal clerk is to acknowledge, receive the letters and put them in the box. The box is opened before the AO or the officer to whom the responsibility of opening the tappals is entrusted and the covers opened.

The officer entrusted with this responsibility should see that all-important communications received from government & superior officers etc. should be perused by the Head of the Office/Dept or Collector. Other communications should be marked to the officer concerned for his/her remarks and further action.

Depending on the nature, the officer should give endorsement on the tappal. To save time and for easy understanding certain endorsement are indicated in the Tottenhan system. They are:

N Dis.: Return it in original. When such endorsement is given, the communication will be returned to the sender indicating the reasons for returning. The gist of which is entered in the inward register and sent back

X N Dis.: In the earlier case it was entered in the inward register. In this case there is no need to enter and simply it will be returned to the sender

L dis. Or Lodge: Papers marked L Dis./lodge are simply closed. No further action on these is needed. However an entry in the inward register and personal register will be made

X L dis.: Purpose is the same i.e. closing it without any action. But no entry is made in the inward register

F Dis.: Means simply file the paper

FI: File it but index them

These are discussed in detail in the chapter dealing with disposals in DOM.

DO letter: You may be knowing that the purpose of DO letter is to draw personal attention of the addressee. The officer whoever receives a DO letter should take care to see that it is replied. In case more time is needed for furnishing the information etc called for in the DO Letter, intimate the position immediately. For this purpose it is advised that the PAs of the officers should maintain a DO letter Register and watch action on such communications. The officer should also check the register once in a fortnight to ensure prompt action.

Reminders:

Normally reminders are sent when the information asked for has not received. It is the duty of the officer to verify the reasons for not sending or giving the information and to see that it is sent. If adequate care is taken at tappals stage receipt of reminders will be reduced and the section will take prompt action

Entry in the Inward Register/Distribution Register

Distribution Register format is given in Form 1, Appendix 8 of the DOM. The tappal clerk will make entries in it only under the specific orders of the officer opening the tappal or mail. The papers to be entered in it are those of the loss of which would be serious or inconvenient or might lead to something important being overlooked. To give few examples, A Government order on an important subject on which specific action has to be taken, or calling for a report on an important subject, any letter or petition, any file of original papers reporting on an appeal, plans, maps and estimates, title deeds and similar documents. The criteria is the paper which is irreplaceable or the loss of which though it is not irreplaceable would cause inconvenience, or draw down the govt. If the answer to all these questions is no the paper is not likely to be one that need to be entered in the distribution register/Inward Register.

It needs to be entered in the distribution register with sufficient particulars to enable the communication to be identified. If it is an official communication, the designation of the officer from whom it came, and its reference number with the date need alone be entered. If it is a letter from a private person, his/her name, number of the letter if it has and its date are usually be sufficient. Subject may be added in few words indicating the particulars, for easy identification. The tappal clerk will enter each paper in the distribution register, the section to which the paper relates and the number of the clerk concerned. The officer opening the tappal or the subordinate supervisory officer like AO or Superintendent or Manager will initial the register after each batch of entries in it. The tappal clerk is responsible for seeing that the clerk who has to deal with the paper acknowledges it in the distribution register. If the serial number of that current in the PR is entered in the DR it will enable to trace the status of the case more easily, if necessary.

There is no need to maintain a separate register for communications received by registered post. Because a man thinks fit to send a communication by a registered post, it may not be of any special importance. Even if it is so, it will be entered in the distribution register and no special precautions are required in regard to it.

Security register

Valuables, cash notes, etc having an actual monetary value will be entered in the usual security register

Distribution of Tappals

You have seen the various stages of receipt of communication in an office i.e. receipt by tappal clerk, opening of the tappal, endorsement by officer, entry in the inward or distribution register.

What to do next? You might have noticed that the tappal is still in the inward/tappal section and not reached the concerned caseworker for taking necessary action on it.

So the next step is to distribute the tappal to the concerned caseworker(s) i.e. the dealing assistants. Let us

see how it is done

To be simple the tappal once entered in the inward/distribution register and affixed with the date stamp and numbered is called “current”. The section head/superintendent will note the endorsement given by the officer and then the current(s) will be handed over to the concerned dealing Assistant duly obtaining the initials of the Assistant in the Inward/Distribution Register.

The Section head/Superintendent will, whenever necessary, give proper guidance to the concerned Assistant in taking necessary action on the currents and supervise the activity.

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