विशेष संवाहक द्वारा
BY SPECIAL MESSENGER

INDIAN COUNCIL OF AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH

Krishi Bhavan, Dr. Rajendra Prasad Road, New Delhi-110014.

Vigilance – 6-1/2015-Vig. II **12th February, 2016**

To

The Directors/Project Director of all Research Institutes/Project Directorates/ National Research Centres, Zonal Project Directorates

Subject :- . The CVC circular regarding timely completion of proceedings/ departmental inquiry proceedings-improving vigilance administration.-reg.

Sir,

A copy of the Central Vigilance Commission, New Delhi letter No. VGL-18/ 305053 dated 18.1.20016 vide letter No. VGL-18/ 305053 dated 18.1.20016 regarding timely completion of proceedings/ departmental inquiry proceedings-improving vigilance administration is enclosed [redacted] for information and compliance.

Yours faithfully,

(GIRISH BHATT)
Under Secretary (Vigilance)

Distribution :-

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सत्यमेव जयते

केन्द्रीय सतर्कता आयोग
CENTRAL VIGILANCE COMMISSION

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सं./No. 000-VGL-18/305053

दिनांक / Dated 18.01.2016

Circular No. 02/01/2016

Subject: **Timely completion of disciplinary proceedings/departmental inquiry proceedings—improving vigilance administration.**

Ref:

(i)	Commission's Circular No. 8(1)(g)/99(2)	dated 19.02.1999
(ii)	Commission's Circular No. 8(1)(g)/99(3)	dated 03.03.1999
(iii)	Commission's Circular No. 3(v)/99(7)	dated 06.09.1999
(iv)	Commission's Circular No. 000/VGL/18	dated 23.05.2000
(vi)	Commission's Office Order No. 51/08/2004	dated 10.08.2004

The Commission has noted with serious concern that the administrative authorities are not adhering to the time-schedules prescribed for completion of disciplinary proceedings. In a recent study conducted by the Commission, it has been noticed that while the average time taken by the administrative authorities in finalisation of disciplinary proceedings is more than 2 years, the maximum time taken in a particular case was eight (8) years and at least in 22% cases the inquiry took more than two years. The Commission vide its Circular No. 8(1)(g)/99(3) dated 03.03.1999 and No. 000/VGL/18 dated 23.05.2000 has laid down the time limits for various stages of disciplinary proceedings right from the stage of investigation to finalisation of the disciplinary case. The time-limit for completion of departmental inquiry is six months from the date of appointment of the IO. Thus, it appears that this time limit is not being adhered to by a majority of the Departments/Organisations. Such long delays not only are unjust to officials who may be ultimately acquitted, but help the guilty evade punitive action for long periods. Further, they have an adverse impact on others who believe that "nothing will happen". The Commission has been emphasising from time to time on the need for expeditious completion of disciplinary proceedings.

2. Recently, the Hon'ble Supreme Court in its judgment dated 16.12.2015 in Civil Appeal No. 958 of 2010 Prem Nath Bali Vs. Registrar, High Court of Delhi & Anr has viewed the delay in handling of disciplinary cases adversely. The Hon'ble Supreme Court while allowing the said appeal in favour of the Appellant Employee has observed as follows:

"29. One cannot dispute in this case that the suspension period was unduly long. We also find that the delay in completion of the departmental proceedings was not wholly attributable to the appellant but it was equally attributable to the respondents as well. Due to such unreasonable delay, the appellant naturally suffered a lot because he and his family had to survive only on suspension allowance for a long period of 9 years.

30. We are constrained to observe as to why the departmental proceeding, which involved only one charge and that too uncomplicated, have taken more than 9 years to conclude the departmental inquiry. No justification was forthcoming from the respondents' side to explain the undue delay in completion of the departmental inquiry except to throw blame on the appellant's conduct which we feel, was not fully justified.

31. Time and again, this Court has emphasized that it is the duty of the employer to ensure that the departmental inquiry initiated against the delinquent employee is concluded within the shortest possible time by taking priority measures. In cases where the delinquent is placed under suspension during the pendency of such inquiry then it becomes all the more imperative for the employer to ensure that the inquiry is concluded in the shortest possible time to avoid any inconvenience, loss and prejudice to the rights of the delinquent employee.

32. As a matter of experience, we often notice that after completion of the inquiry, the issue involved therein does not come to an end because if the findings of the inquiry proceedings have gone against the delinquent employee, he invariably pursues the issue in Court to ventilate his grievance, which again consumes time for its final conclusion.

33. Keeping these factors in mind, we are of the considered opinion that every employer (whether State or private) must make sincere endeavor to conclude the departmental inquiry proceedings once initiated against the delinquent employee within a reasonable time by giving priority to such proceedings and as far as possible it should be concluded within six months as an outer limit. Where it is not possible for the employer to conclude due to certain unavoidable causes arising in the proceedings within the time frame then efforts should be made to conclude within reasonably extended period depending upon the cause and the nature of inquiry but not more than a year."

3. The Commission has observed that a number of factors contribute to the delay in the conduct of departmental inquiries and with prudent management this needs to be checked. The departmental inquiry is often delayed due to laxity on the part of IO, lack of monitoring by DA & CVO, non-availability of listed or additional documents, delay in inspection of original or certified documents, frequent adjournments, non-attendance of witnesses, especially private witnesses, faulty charge-sheets and frequent change of IO/PO and non-monitoring of progress of inquiry. The Commission suggests that the following steps may be ensured and complied strictly by the IOs/administrative authorities:

(i) In cases where investigation has been conducted by the CBI/ other investigating agency and the documents have been seized by them for prosecution in courts and RDA is also contemplated, it is the responsibility of the CVO/DA to procure from the CBI/investigating agency legible certified copies of seized documents required for RDA. In cases investigated by CVOs it must be ensured that certified legible photocopies of all documents are made available at the time of preparation of draft charge-sheet itself.

(ii) While drafting the charge-sheet it may be ensured that all the relied upon documents as well as copies of relevant rules/instructions are in the custody of CVO. After issue of charge-sheet and submission of defence statement, the DA is required to take a decision within 15 days for appointment of IO/PO in major penalty cases.

(iii) As far as practicable, the IO should be chosen from amongst the serving officers/retired officers in the same station where the charged officer is posted, who is likely to continue till the conclusion of inquiry.

(iv) It may be ensured that the PO is appointed simultaneously. Changes in IO/PO be resorted to only in exceptional cases under intimation to the Commission (in respect of officers within the jurisdiction of the Commission).

(v) In cases involving more than one charged officer, it may be ensured that, as far as practicable, same IO/PO is appointed in all cases.

(vi) The PO must keep copies of relevant Rules/Regulations/Instructions etc. readily available with him. Departments/Organisations should also ensure online availability of all their Rules/Regulations/Instructions etc. so that it can be downloaded during the inquiry proceedings without any loss of time.

(vii) It may be ensured that the defence documents are made available within the time allowed by the IO. Responsibility should be fixed on the custodian of such documents for any undue delay/not producing it in time or loss of these documents.

(viii) The IO should normally conduct Regular Hearing on a day to day basis and not grant more than one adjournment for appearance of witnesses. It may be ensured that all the prosecution or defence witnesses are summoned and examined in separate but simultaneous batches expeditiously.

(ix) If witnesses do not appear in response to notices or are not produced by PO/CO as the case may be, powers conferred under the Departmental Inquiries (Enforcement of Attendance of Witnesses and Production of Documents) Act, 1972 be exercised to request the Competent Court to pass orders for production of the witness through summons issued by the Court.

(x) The IO should, as far as practicable, desist from allowing interlocutory documents sought either by the PO or the CO as additional documents during the deposition of witnesses.

(xi) The time-limit for various stages of inquiry, as prescribed by the Commission vide its Circular No. 8(1)(g)99(3) dated 03.03.1999, may be complied with strictly by the disciplinary authorities and the inquiry officers.

(xii) Where the CO or PO do not co-operate in the manner of attendance, production of documents, witnesses etc., IO may after affording reasonable opportunity, proceed to give a report ex-parte based on facts, documents, witnesses produced before him.

4. The suggested time limits for conducting departmental inquiries prescribed by the Commission for various stages is annexed for ready reference. Timely completion of departmental inquiry/departmental proceedings is the prime responsibility of the Disciplinary Authority. Therefore, the disciplinary authorities in each Ministry/Department/Organisation may regularly monitor the progress of inquiry on regular basis and ensure that the inquiry/departmental proceedings are completed within the time-limit prescribed as laid down by Hon'ble Supreme Court in the above cited case. The CVO concerned would assist the disciplinary authority in monitoring the progress of departmental proceedings. The Commission may recommend adverse action against the concerned disciplinary/administrative authority who is found responsible for any unexplained delay observed in any case. In appropriate cases wherein the IO delays the proceedings, DA may not hesitate to take necessary and appropriate action against the IO.

(J. Vinod Kumar)
Director

To

(i) The Secretaries of all Ministries/Departments of GoI
(ii) All Chief Executives of CPSUs/Public Sector Banks/Public Sector Insurance Companies/Autonomous Bodies/etc.
(iii) All CVOs of Ministries/Departments of GoI/CPSUs/Public Sector Banks/Public Sector Insurance Companies/Autonomous Bodies/ etc.
(iv) Website of CVC

(10)

Annexure

Model Time Limit for Departmental Inquiries as laid down in Circular No. 8(1)(g)99(3) dated 03.03.1999

Stage of Departmental Inquiry	Time Limit prescribed
• Fixing date of Preliminary Hearing and inspection of listed documents, submission of Defence documents/witnesses and nomination of a Defence Assistant (DA) (if not already nominated)	Within four weeks
• Inspection of relied upon documents/submission of list of DWs/Defence documents/Examination of relevancy of Defence documents/DWs, procuring of additional documents and submission of certificates confirming inspection of additional documents by CO/DA • Issue of summons to the witnesses, fixing the date of Regular Hearing and arrangement for participation of witnesses in the Regular Hearing • Regular Hearing on Day to Day basis	3 months
• Submission of Written Brief by PO to CO/IO	15 days
• Submission of Written Brief by CO to IO	15 days
• Submission of Inquiry Report from the date of receipt of written Brief by PO/CO	30 days

NB: If the above schedule is not consistent /in conflict with the existing rules/ regulations of any organisation, the outer time limit of six months for completing the Departmental Inquiries should be strictly adhered to.