

CHAPTER XI

Publication of official documents and Press Communiqué

220. *Publication of official documents.*—Official documents of Government, except those which are obviously meant for public consumption should not, as a rule, be published unless there are definite orders of Government to the contrary.

Following instructions should be observed in regard to the publication of an official correspondence :—

- (a) Communications to and from the Government of India should, in no case be made public either in the actual form in which they were issued or in the form of an abstract without the sanction of the Government of India; unless, in the case of communications from the Government of India, they have been marked for distribution to the Press or have already been published in the Gazette of India or are obviously meant for public consumption.
- (b) No official communication addressed by a subordinate to a superior authority or *vice-versa*, should in normal circumstances be published by the addressing authority until the addressee has received it. When circumstances render earlier publication expedient arrangements for publication should be made by telegram, the contents of the document being indicated to the addressee at the same time. If, in rare cases of exigency, it should be impossible to adopt either of these courses, telegraphic intimation of the circumstances with an explanation, should be sent to the addressee.
- (c) No Government in India, and no member of a Government should, in any circumstances, give publicity to documents which might seem to reflect upon a superior authority, without first obtaining the latter's consent, and no assistance must ever be given to the Press in formulating adverse comments upon the orders of the superior authority.
- (d) No correspondence between the Government of India and a State Government which indicate a difference of opinion, should be communicated by a State Government to any person or authority subordinate to a State Government without the express permission of the Government of India.
- (e) In personal cases which have formed the subjects of correspondence between a State Government and the Government of India, the deciding authority should in every case clearly indicate :—
 - (i) whether only the substance of the decision should be communicated to the officer concerned; or,

- (ii) whether in addition a statement of the grounds upon which it is based, or portions of the correspondence and if so, which portions, should be similarly communicated.

Note.—It should be clearly understood that supplying information to a member of the Legislature or laying papers on the table of the Legislative Assembly is equivalent to publication.

(2) The restrictions imposed in the rules above are not intended to apply to departmental administration reports which may be communicated to the press as soon as they are issued or after they have been reviewed by the State Government.

221. *Printed papers from the Government of India for distribution to the Press.*—The requisite number of copies of printed paper marked 'for distribution to the Press' will be supplied by the Government of India for distribution to the Newspapers and institutions which have no accredited representations at the headquarters of the Government of India. On receipt, such papers should be sent to the Director Public Relations for distribution to the newspapers and institutions entitled to them.

PRESS COMMUNIQUEES AND OFFICIAL ADVERTISEMENTS

222. (i) *Publicity of Government decisions, departmental activities, etc.*—The Public Relations Department should be utilized by Secretaries and Heads of Departments as the sole agency for publicizing Government decisions and departmental activities and undertaking having news value. Whereas the accredited press correspondents will have access to the Ministers and Secretaries of the Departments to elicit any information, the ordinary channel of communication with the press would be the Public Relations Department. When, for any reason, any information has been given to the press correspondents direct by Minister or a Secretary to Government, a copy of it should be supplied to the Director of Public Relations with this intimation. All the departments should regularly supply to the Public Relations Department material which is desired to be put for publicity. It rests with the Head of the Department concerned to decide upon the selection of material which may be in the nature of data, in the shape of facts and figures, or details of schemes in execution or in the planning stage. After receiving the material the Director of Public Relations will decide as to which medium or media would be suitable for publicity and steps would be taken to mould the material into shape. All material intended for the press should ordinarily reach the Director of Public Relations before 2 P.M. to enable him to have it translated into the languages required, cyclostyled and released to the press the same day for publication. If there is anything of exceptional importance necessitating immediate release after 2 P.M., it may be communicated to the Director, Public Relations over the telephone followed by a note in writing, confirming the telephone message.

(2) The Director of Public Relations will depute one of the officers to visit and collect the necessary publicity material from each Department regularly. This officer will contact the Head of the Department (or an officer deputed by him for this purpose), the Secretary to Government and, if necessary, even the Minister, for this purpose. The Heads of Departments (or officers deputed by them for this purpose) and Secretaries to Government are expected to supply the material meant for publicity purposes when approached by the Public Relation

Officer. These officers will also bring to the notice of Heads of Departments, Secretaries etc., criticism appearing in the press about their departments to enable the latter to take suitable action or to give correct information to the public.

(3) Press communiques and other matters involving question of policy should invariably be approved by the Administrative Secretary concerned before they are sent by the Heads of Departments to the Director, Public Relations. Press interviews should normally be done at the level of the Administrative Secretary. However, the Head of the Department may address a press conference, in coordination with the Director, Public Relations, relating to developmental activities of his Department.

223. It will be the duty of the Superintendent/Section Officer/Head of the Branch or Section Officer of the Assistant, who is dealing with a case, to bring it to the notice of the Secretary at as early a stage as possible, that the case is likely to have publicity value. The Superintendent/Section Officer/Head of Branch or Section Officer or the Assistant in charge should put up a brief summary to the Secretary, which could be sent to the Director of Public Relations for advance information, where possible. This will give the Director of Public Relations time to consider how he may best give publicity to the decisions of the Government. It may sometimes be undesirable to issue advance information to the Director of Public Relations, but in all cases, where a communique will probably eventually issue, the Director of Public Relations should be informed before hand. The press generally needs some back-ground before they can deal properly with a Government communique on what may be sometimes a technical matter. They can only be provided with this background if the Director of Public Relations knows it himself, and he cannot know unless he is kept properly informed.

When the Administrative Secretary or a Head of Department decides to send any documents to the Director of Public Relations, he should assume that the Director will publish it, unless directions to the contrary are specifically conveyed to him. Care should, therefore, be taken to append a note to the effect that the material supplied is for advance information at this stage. Such material should be, therefore, clearly marked at the top either (i) 'for publicity' or (ii) 'confidential for information at present'. A clear indication should also be given if any portion of the material supplied should be treated as confidential.

224. *Publication of official advertisements.*—When a Department or office wishes an official advertisement to be inserted in newspapers, it should send an indent to the Director of Public Relations enclosing with the indent as many copies of the advertisement as the number of newspapers in which the advertisement is to be inserted, together with an additional copy for record in the office of the Director of Public Relations, who will arrange for publication of the advertisement in the newspapers to be selected from the approved list of newspapers maintained by him. He will receive the bills of the newspapers and after satisfying himself about their correctness, countersign them and forward them for payment to the indenting officer concerned.

225. *Papers for publicity purposes not to be supplied to private person.*—As communication of official papers to a private person is in fact publication, no matter what guarantees may be offered, papers that are made available for publicity purposes should, under no circumstances, be supplied to private persons without the written approval in each case of the Secretary in the department concerned.