

Annual Performance Appraisal Report (APAR)

1. Annual performance appraisal report (APAR) is a feedback mechanism to the officer reported upon (ORU), the performer. At least two of her supervisory officers, namely, the reporting officer and the reviewing officer, are associated with this feedback system. In some services, like the All-India Services, there is accepting authority too. Before 2008-09, APAR was known as annual confidential report (roll) in Indian civil service.
2. APAR is an annual exercise. In Government Services and posts, APAR is generally written for the period of, de financial year. It is expected to be completed within the stipulated time framework. It is written in respect of officers on duty in the cadre, on deputation and on study leave.
3. There is a basic human tendency to make judgements about those one is working with, as well as about oneself. Appraisal, therefore, is both inevitable and universal. Early appraisal system in an organisation was a simple method of income justification. That is, appraisal was used to decide whether or not the salary or wage of an individual employee was justified. The process was firmly linked to material outcomes. There is a school of thought which opines that appraisal is inherently flawed. There is another school of thought which opines that it is the most crucial aspect of organizational life. Between these two extremes lie various schools of belief. There are appraisees who are inclined to believe that appraisal results should be linked directly to reward outcomes but are suspicious and disappointed if one does not get the rewards. In the absence of a carefully structured system of appraisal, people will tend to judge the work performance of others, including subordinates, naturally, informally and arbitrarily. The human inclination to judge can create serious motivational, ethical and legal problems in the workplace. Hence there is a need for a structured appraisal system. In Indian civil services there is a structured annual performance appraisal system. Flaws, if any, is directly attributable to the officers associated with the appraisal mechanism.
4. APAR is to serve two principal objectives:
 - a) to improve the performance of the subordinate in his present job, and
 - b) to assess the potentialities of the subordinate and prepare him through appropriate feedback and guidance for future possible opportunities in service.
5. Reporting Officer should have a very clear perception of these objectives. She should be developmental not judgmental. APAR is an indicator of the achievement of the officer, and not be a tool to control or discipline him. What is expected from the reporting officer and the reviewing officer is:
 - a) Translate organizational goals into individual job objective.
 - b) Communicate expectations of the Government regarding employee performance
 - c) Provide feedback to the employee about job performance in light of principles of good governance
 - d) Train the employee on how to achieve good governance
 - e) Diagnose the employee's strengths and lesser strengths
 - f) Determine what kind of development activities might help the employee better utilize her skills and attitude improve performance on the current and the future job
6. APAR process: The performance appraisal process typically consists of four inter-related steps as follows:
 - a) Establish a common understanding between the reporting officer (supervisor) and officer reported upon (ORU) (performer) regarding work expectations, mainly, the work to be accomplished and how that work is to be evaluated. This is the annual target for the ORU.
 - b) Ongoing assessment of performance with possible mid-term review. Provisions should be made for

the regular feedback of information to clarify and modify the goals and expectations, to correct unacceptable performance before it is too late.

- c) Formal documentation of performance through the completion of a performance and development appropriate appraisal form.
 - d) Redress mechanism to resolve gap between the expectations of ORU and the feedback given by the supervisory officers.
7. Use of software for performance appraisal: Smart Performance Appraisal Report Recording online window (SPARROW) is NIC developed software to enable electronic filing of performance appraisal by government officers. It is user-friendly and allows filing from anywhere, any time as per the officer's convenience.

8. Activities in the process of APAR exercise

- a) Blank PAR form to be given to the officer reported upon by the Administration Division/Home Department/Environment & Forest, specifying the reporting officer and reviewing authority
- b) Self-appraisal for current year
- c) Appraisal by reporting authority
- d) Appraisal by reviewing authority
- e) Appraisal by accepting authority
- f) Disclosure to the officer reported upon
- g) Comments of the officer reported upon, if any (if none, transmission of the PAR to the DOPT/MHA/the Ministry of Environment & Forests)
- h) Forwarding of comments of the officer reported upon to the reviewing and the reporting authority by the accepting authority, in case the officer reported upon makes comments
- i) Comments of reporting authority
- j) Comments of reviewing authority
- k) Comments of accepting authority/PAR to be finalized and disclosed to the officer reported upon.
- l) Representation to the Referral Board by the officer reported upon
- m) Forwarding of representation to the Referral Board along with the comments of reporting authority/reviewing authority and accepting authority
- n) Finalization by Referral Board if the officer reported upon represents against the decision of the Accepting Authority
- o) Disclosure to the officer reported upon
- p) End of entire APAR Process

9. There are often confusion between the terms 'performance appraisal report' and 'performance appraisal dossier'. Performance appraisal report is a prescribed format in which the ORU submits his self-appraisal and the reporting, reviewing and accepting authority shall ensure that the portions of the forms which are to be filled in by them are completed by them within the time limit specified. Performance appraisal dossier, on the other hand, is a broader term. It consists:

- a) A Curriculum Vitae to be updated annually on the basis of the performance appraisal reports and a five-yearly
- b) Curriculum Vitae update submitted by the officer reported upon
- c) The performance appraisal reports earned throughout the career.
- d) Certificates of training, academic courses attended after joining service, study leave
- e) Details of books, articles and other publications.
- f) Appreciation letters from Government or Secretary or Head of Department or special bodies or Commissions.
- g) Reports of medical check-ups.

- h) Copy of order imposing any of the penalties specified in the All India Services (Discipline and Appeal) Rules, 1969 and final result of inquiry into allegations and charges against a member of the Service.
- i) Warnings or displeasure or reprimands of the Government

General guidelines for filling up the PAR form for Indian Police Service up to the level of Inspector General of Police

1. Introduction

- 1.1. The Performance Appraisal Report is an important document. It provides the basic and vital inputs for further development of an officer. The officer reported upon, the Reporting Authority, Reviewing Authority and the Accepting Authority should, therefore, undertake the duty of filling up the form with a high sense of responsibility.
- 1.2 Performance appraisal should be used as a tool for career planning and training, rather than a mere judgmental exercise. Reporting Authorities should realize that the objective is to develop an officer so that he/she realizes his/her true potential. It is not meant to be a faultfinding process but a developmental tool. The Reporting Authority, the Reviewing Authority and the Accepting Authority should not shy away from reporting shortcomings in performance, attitudes or overall personality of the officer reported upon.
- 1.3 The columns should be filled with due care and attention and after devoting adequate time. Any attempt to fill the report in a casual or superficial manner will be easily discernible to the higher authorities.
- 1.4 Although the actual documentation of performance appraisal is a year-end exercise, in order that it may be a tool for human resource development, career planning and training, rather than a mere judgmental exercise, the Reporting Authority and the officer reported upon should meet during the course of the year at regular intervals to review the performance and to take necessary corrective steps.

Instructions on filling up the different sections

2. Section-I

- 2.1 This Section should be filled up in the Administration Division/Home Deptt. Period of report could either be the entire reporting year, namely, from 1st of April to 31st March or a part of the year (exceeding 3 months). In case the period of report is a full year, it should be indicated accordingly; for example, 2007-2008. In case the period of report is less than the entire year, specific start and end dates should be indicated, for example, 10th September 2007 – 31st March 2008.
- 2.2 Information on the present grade (pay-scale) as well as present post (actual designation and organization) and the date from which he/she has been on his/her present post needs to be mentioned.
- 2.3 In the table relating to reporting, reviewing and accepting authorities the name and designation of the reporting and reviewing authorities should be mentioned so that the officer reported upon is clear about whom he/she is required to send the report.
- 2.4 The period of absence from duty, on leave, training, or for other reasons, should also be mentioned in this section in the table provided for the purpose. Details of the training attended, date of filing of property returns and whether the officer reported upon has reported/reviewed and the annual performance report of all his/her subordinate officers for the previous year should be mentioned in the table for the purpose.
- 2.5 This Section provides for regular annual medical examination. The health check is mandatory for all Indian Police Service officers. A copy of the summary of medical report is to be attached to the PAR Form by the Admin./Home Department. The format for health check up and the summary of medical report will be as circulated by the Cadre Controlling Authority, after consultation with the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.

3. Section-II

- 3.1 The officer reported upon is first required to give brief description of his/her duties and responsibilities, which would normally not exceed about 100 words. Ideally, this should be in bullet form.
- 3.2 All officers are required to develop a work plan for the year and agree upon the same with the reporting officer. The work plan should incorporate the relative annual work rhythm and budgetary cycle. This exercise is to be carried out at the beginning of the year and finalized by 30th April, positively. In case of a change of the reporting officer during the year, the work plan agreed with the previous reporting officer would continue to apply. The work plan agreed upon at the beginning of the year has to be reviewed again during the month of September/October as a mid-year exercise and finalized by 31st October. Based on this review the work plan may undergo some changes from that originally prepared.

3.3 After the work plan is prepared, it is possible that the officer reported upon is transferred out. There need not be more than one work plan for one post each year. The period spent by the officer during the year and his contribution could be

considered for evaluating his performance against the work plan. In the case of mid-term transfers, continuity and assessment of work and the lower performance profile in the first quarter should be taken into consideration.

3.4 The work plans, duly signed by the officer reported upon and the reporting authority has to be submitted to the reviewing authority for his/her perusal and custody. The performance appraisal form provides for an assessment of the accomplishments vis-à-vis the work plan agreed at the commencement of the year and reviewed mid- year. The officer reported upon is required to fill up the table provided for the purpose in Section-II.

3.5 It is not necessary that the work plan should be entirely quantitative in nature. While for field level posts, the work plan would consist essentially of quantifiable targets, for secretarial level posts it would consist of policy objectives to be achieved etc.

3.6 Section II also provides an opportunity for the officer to reflect upon his/her performance during the year and indicate one item which he/she thought was a significant contributions made by him/her during the year. It is always possible for any officer to make significant contribution even in activities otherwise regarded as routine in nature. Examples of such contribution may be the successful organization of a major event like the Kumbh Mela or successful conclusion of an activity that has been going on for a long time, or even successful dealing of an emergency (e.g. major earth quake/flood) would certainly be an exceptional contribution.

3.7 The officer reported upon is required to indicate specific areas in which he/she feels the need to upgrade skills and attend training programs. He/she should also mention the specific steps that he/she has taken or proposes to take to upgrade his/her skills in the identified area.

3.8 There is an increased emphasis on competency building in the new performance appraisal and career progression system. There would be a premium on competency and skill upgradation. Hence, all officers are advised, through a note in Section II, to keep the cadre controlling authority informed, at least once in five years, of all educational and training programs attended, including the details of marks/grades secured in such programs, details of professional papers published. These would be taken into account in the future career progression.

3.9 This Section also requires the officer reported upon to record certain certificates about submission of property returns, annual medical check up and setting up of annual work plan for whom he/she would be the reporting authority.

4. Section-III

4.1 Section III requires the reporting authority to comment on Section II as filled out by the officer reported upon, and specifically state whether he/she agrees with the responses relating to the accomplishments. In case of disagreement the reporting authority should highlight the specific portions with which he/she is unable to agree and the reasons for such disagreement.

4.2 This Section then requires the reporting authority to comment on the skill upgradation needs as identified by the officer.

4.3 Thereafter, this Section requires the reporting authority to record a numerical grade in respect of the workout put of the officer reported upon both in respect of the planned work as well as the unforeseen tasks. A numerical grade is also required in respect of the "quality" of the output. In doing so, the reporting authority should take into account the costs incurred (whether the officer reported upon has been cost conscious), the time taken and whether the laid down rules/procedures have been adhered to in accomplishing the tasks.

4.4 The reporting authority is also required to record a numerical grade in respect of work output, personal attributes and functional competencies.

4.5 Section III requires the reporting authority to comment on the integrity of the officer reported upon. In recording remarks with regard to integrity, he/she need not limit him/herself only to matters relating to financial integrity but could also take into account the moral and intellectual integrity of the officer reported upon. The following procedure should be followed in filling up the column relating to integrity:

- a) If the Officer's integrity is beyond doubt, it may be stated.
- b) If there is any doubt or suspicion, the column should be left blank and action taken as under:
 - a. A separate secret note should be recorded and followed up. A copy of the note should also be sent together with the Performance Appraisal Report to the next superior officer who will ensure that the follow up action is taken expeditiously. Where it is not possible either to certify the integrity or to record the secret note, the Reporting Officer should state either that he/she had not watched the officer's work for sufficient time to form a definite judgement or that he/she has heard nothing against the officer, as the case may be.
 - b. If, as a result of the follow up action, the doubts or suspicions are cleared, the officer's integrity should be certified and an entry made accordingly in the Performance Appraisal Report.
 - c. If the doubts or suspicions are confirmed, this fact should also be recorded and duly communicated to the officer concerned.

- d. If as a result of the follow up action, the doubts or suspicions are neither cleared nor confirmed, the officers

conduct should be watched for a further period and thereafter action taken as indicated at (b) and (c) above.

4.6 The reporting authority is also required to record a descriptive pen-picture on the overall qualities of the officer reported upon and his/her performance including his attitude towards weaker sections. This need not exceed about 100 words and should try to cover overall qualities of the officer including areas of strengths and lesser strengths. The pen-picture is also meant to be a qualitative supplement to the quantitative assessments made earlier part of this section.

4.7 Reporting authority is then required to make recommendations relating to domain assignment.

4.8. Finally, the reporting authority is required to record an overall grade. This should also be done on a scale of 1-10, with 1 referring to the lowest grade and 10 to the highest.

5. Section-IV

5.1 This Section is to be filled up by the reviewing authority. He/she is required to indicate if he/she agrees with the assessments made by the reporting officer. In case of disagreement, he/she may record his/her own assessment against the work output or any of the attributes in the column specifically provided for the purpose. In case of agreement, he/she need not fill in the column meant for him/her in the attributes/work output tables. Finally he/she is required to record an overall grade in the scale of 1-10.

6. Section-V

6.1 This Section is to be filled by the accepting authority. He/she is required to indicate if he/she agrees with the assessments made by the reporting authority/reviewing authorities. In case of difference of opinion, he/she is required to give details and reasons for the same in the column specifically provided for the purpose in the table in Section V.

7. Numerical Grades

7.1 At several places, numerical grades are to be awarded by reporting and review authorities. These should be on a scale of 1-10, where 1 refers to the lowest grade and 10 to the highest. It is expected that any grading of 1 or 2 (against work output or attributes or overall grade) would be adequately justified in the pen-picture by way of specific failures and similarly, any grade of 9 or 10 would be justified with respect to specific accomplishments. Grades of 1-2 or 9-10 are expected to be rare occurrences and hence the need to justify them. In awarding a numerical grade the reporting, reviewing and accepting authorities should rate the officer against a larger population of his/her peers that may be currently working under them or would have worked under them in the past.

7.2 Weightage & Mean

Weights have been assigned to work output, personal attributes and functional competency. The overall grade will be based on the addition of the mean value of each group of indicators in proportion to weightage assigned.

8. Disclosure

8.1 There should be more openness in the system of appraisal. The annual PAR, including the overall grade and integrity, should be communicated to the officer reported upon after it has been finalized by the accepting authority.

9. Representation

9.1 The officer reported upon may have the option to give his comments on the PAR. Such comments may be restricted to the specific factual observations contained in the Performance Appraisal Report leading to the assessment of the officer in terms of attributes, competency and output. If comments are submitted, the Reporting/Reviewing/Accepting Authority would have the option to accept them and modify the PAR accordingly. If the comments are not accepted, the views of the Reporting/Reviewing/Accepting Authority would be communicated with reasons to the officer reported upon. Thereafter, only if the officer reported upon so desires, he may request for the matter to be forwarded to the Referral Board. The representation shall be confined to errors of facts and nothing else. The Referral Board shall give clear findings on the representation and take a final decision on the assessment, including the overall grading in regard to the parameters affected thereby. The decision along with details in case an entry is upgraded or down graded with, reasons for same may be recorded in the PAR and the same communicated to the officer reported upon. The decision of the Referral Board shall be final.

9.2 The completed PAR should reach the Cadre Controlling Authorities by 31st March the following year. The Cadre Controlling Authority will prepare a list of PARs not received and follow up with the Secretaries of the concerned Ministries and Chief Secretaries of the respective States.

9.3 Secretary (Home) in the State and the Joint Secretary (Police) in the Centre shall be the Nodal officers to ensure that the PARs of the members of Service, duly completed, are sent to the Cadre Controlling Authority by 31st March of the following year. They shall send a list each of the members of Service whose PARs are to be written and reviewed to the concerned Reporting/Reviewing/Accepting Authorities by 15th April every year to enable them to ensure completion of PARs within the time-schedule.

9.4. If a PAR relating to a financial year is not recorded by the 31st of December of the year in which the financial year ended, no remarks shall be recorded thereafter. The member of Service will be assessed based on the overall record and self-

assessment of the year concerned, if he had given his self-assessment in time and the Reporting Authority, Reviewing Authority and the Accepting Authority have not completed the PAR according to the time schedule given in para 9.1.

9.5. The member of Service reported upon shall, while forwarding his self-appraisal to the Reporting Authority, endorse a copy of the self-appraisal, to the nodal officer and keep a record of the same as evidence that he had submitted the same in time.

9.6. The Reporting Authority shall record his comments in the PAR of the officer reported upon within the stipulated time and send it to the Reviewing Authority along with a copy thereof to the nodal Authority.

9.7. In case the Reporting Authority fails to submit the PAR to the Reviewing Authority within the stipulated period under intimation to the nodal officer, the nodal officer shall send a copy of self-appraisal directly to the Reviewing Authority and authorize him to initiate the PAR. The nodal officer shall also keep a note of the failure of the Reporting Authority to submit the PAR of his subordinate in time for an appropriate entry in the PAR of such Reporting Authorities.

9.8. The nodal officer shall evolve a suitable mechanism to ensure that the remarks of the Reporting, the Reviewing and the Accepting Authorities are recorded without fail by the dates given in the schedule below Para 9.1.

10. Composition of the Referral Board

For Indian Administrative Service

(a) In respect of officers working in the States -

(i) Chief Secretary of the State	Chairperson
(ii) Senior most Secretary in the State	Member
(iii) Secretary (Appointments)	Convener

(b) In respect of officers working in the Centre -

(i) Cabinet Secretary	Chairperson
(ii) Secretary (Personnel)	Member
(iii) Establishment Officer	Convener

For Indian Police Service

(a) In respect of officers working in the States –

(i) Chief Secretary of the State	Chairperson
(ii) Director General of Police	Member
(iii) Secretary (Appointments)	Member
(iv) Principal Secretary/Secretary, Home Department	Convener

(b) In respect of officers working in the Centre –

(i) Cabinet Secretary	Chairperson
(ii) Secretary (Home)	Member
(iii) Establishment Officer, Department of Personnel and Training	Member
(iv) Joint Secretary (Police)	Convener

Provided that when the officer being appraised is of the level of Joint Secretary or above, the Joint Secretary (Police) may be replaced by an officer of the level of Secretary to be nominated by the Cabinet Secretary.

For Indian Forest Service

(a) In respect of officers working in the States -

(i) Chief Secretary of the State	Chairperson
(ii) Principal Chief Conservator of Forests in the State	Member
(iii) Secretary (Appointments)	Member
(iv) Principal Secretary (Environment and Forests)/ Secretary (Environment and Forests)	Convener

(b) In respect of officers working in the Centre –

(i) Cabinet Secretary	Chairperson
(ii) Secretary (Environment and Forests)	Member
(iii) Establishment Officer, Department of Personnel and Training	Member
(v) Joint Secretary (CCI)	Convener

Provided that when the officer being appraised is of the level of Joint Secretary or above, the Joint Secretary (CCI) may be replaced by an officer of the level of Secretary to be nominated by the Cabinet Secretary.

11. Conclusion

There have always been criticism of performance appraisal system. The problem is not with the process and the system devised but the officers associated with the exercise. Even in today's transparent performance appraisal system, there are officers who consider it a tool to control and punish the subordinate officers. The senior officer must consider them not as subordinates but as team members whose performance and development is her responsibility. APAR should be a culmination of regular observation of performance of team members. There are exemplary Chief Executives who make it a point to remember the team members whom they come into contact frequently. Such officers build good teams. Remember: People who feel good about themselves perform better.
