

Annexure 2 – Reference Handout

There are many established ways for citizens to engage with governments—some derived from laws and some directly from communities. There is no one *right* way to engage; instead, the democratic set-up offers many avenues for citizens to explore how they wish to communicate with the government and each other.

Addressing to Government

Participating online through MyGov.in

- Launched on July 26, 2014, MyGov.in is an online platform of the government that promotes active citizen participation through various consultations, quizzes, polls, surveys, and competitions.
- Citizens can directly create their accounts on MyGov.in and engage with the content.
- Popular platform for getting governance ideas from citizens.

Public Grievances for Administrative Reforms: Online/Post

The grievances can be sent to:

- The Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances. (pgportal.gov.in)
- The grievances can be lodged online on the portal. In cases where internet facility is not available or even otherwise, the citizen is free to send her/his grievance by Post. There is no prescribed format.
- A unique registration number is given to each grievance. It may be tracked on the pgportal using view status link and after providing unique registration number.
- Every Central Ministry / Department has designated a Joint Secretary or a Director / Deputy Secretary, as its 'Director of Grievances'. He / She is the nodal officer for redress of grievances on work areas allocated to that Ministry / Department.
- The grievances received in the department are forwarded to the Ministries/Departments concerned. Redressal of grievances is done by respective Ministries/Departments /State/ UT/ NCT Government in a decentralized manner.
- 30 days is the time limit for redress of grievance.
- You can register and lodge Public related grievance on this link: <https://pgportal.gov.in/Home/LodgeGrievance>

Co-creating laws:

- Various ministries of the Union Government seek public feedback on draft policies, amendments, proposed plans, and ideas. Citizens can communicate their feedback directly to the ministries or make use of platform that enable this consultative process.
- This form of gathering public feedback is encouraged by a 2014 government policy called the **Pre-Legislative Consultation Policy**, which encourages lawmakers to open a draft of the document for public consultation for a minimum period of 30 days.
- Citizens must participate by writing emails, participating in research surveys, interviews, etc. By participating in the lawmaking process, citizens get a sense of ownership, allowing consensus to be built through dialogue.

Community based Awareness & Actions

Signature Campaigns

Participating in movements or demonstrations about issues that affect you or those you feel strongly about can help build solidarity within communities. This can be through peaceful protest rally, signature campaigns – online or offline, etc.

Using your voice

Contributing your thoughts and expressions by writing articles or using social media to express your voice and starting dialogue on political or governance issues is also an important mode of citizen engagement. Citizens have many options to voice their thoughts and opinions on governance issues both for online and offline mode. For example: Writing articles in newspapers, social media, doing street play, etc.

Joining a protest

- Protesting is legal in India and backed by two fundamental rights from the Constitution—the right to freedom of speech and expression and the right to assemble peacefully without arms.
- It is important to note that protests must be conducted only, if necessary, compliance is met and conditions are fulfilled (for example, acquiring permissions for loudspeakers and tents).
- It is also important to note that responses from authorities may differ despite full compliance with the law. In such cases, it is best to have correct information on citizens’ rights and recourses when deciding to join a protest.

Asking Questions: RTI

- Citizens are guaranteed the right to demand transparency, accountability, and answers from the government in the Right to Information Act, 2005.
- RTI Act has created a structure that allows citizens to ask public officials questions on their working, the departments’ functioning, budgets and projects, to name a few areas. By law, public officials are obliged to answer such questions within a period of 30 days.
- The process of requesting information under this law is very simple and the application can be made either offline or online.
- Online RTI steps and Link: <https://rtionline.gov.in/guidelines.php?appeal> also to find out more about RTI refer <https://rtionline.gov.in/>

Volunteering

Volunteering with civil society organisations or clubs for the betterment of one’s community. Small actions such as participating in clean-up drives, garbage segregation, etc.