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RBI releases Annual Report of Ombudsman Schemes, 2019-20

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) today released the [Annual Report](#) of the “Ombudsman Schemes of the Reserve Bank for the year 2019-20”. The Banking Ombudsman Scheme (BOS) was first notified by the Reserve Bank in 1995 under Section 35 A of the Banking Regulation Act, 1949. It is administered by the Reserve Bank through 22 Offices of Banking Ombudsman (OBOs) covering all states and union territories. The Annual Report covers the activities under the Banking Ombudsman Scheme (BOS), the Ombudsman Scheme for Non-Banking Financial Companies (OSNBFC) and the Ombudsman Scheme for Digital Transactions (OSDT); the developments in the area of consumer protection and the way forward.

The grievance redress machinery of the Reserve Bank functioned with round-the-clock availability, leveraging on the capabilities of the state-of-the-art Complaint Management System (CMS). The CMS platform, which was launched in June 2019, brought all stakeholders namely the Reserve Bank, the Regulated Entities (REs) and their customers on one web-based platform; and digitalised the entire process of handling of customer grievances by the Reserve Bank.

Some highlights from the Annual Report are as follows:

A. Activities under BOS, OSNBFCs and OSDT - July 1, 2019 to June 30, 2020

- i) There was an increase of 64.97 per cent in the receipt of complaints under the three Ombudsman Schemes, from 2,00,362 complaints in 2018-19 to 3,30,543 complaints in 2019-20. Of these, 86.19 per cent were received electronically i.e. through the CMS online portal and email. Despite surge in receipt of complaints, disposal rate of more than 92 per cent was achieved. 72.27 per cent of the maintainable complaints were resolved through mediation and conciliation.
- ii) The major grounds of complaints at OBOs were: (a) ATM/Debit Cards; (b) Mobile/Electronic banking; (c) non-observance of Fair Practices Code (FPC).
- iii) The major grounds of complaints under OSNBFC were (a) non-observance of regulatory guidelines; (b) lack of transparency in contract/ loan agreement; (c) levy of charges without notice.

B. Important developments during July 1, 2019 to June 30, 2020

- i) The Internal Ombudsman (IO) Scheme was extended to non-bank system participants with more than one crore outstanding prepaid payment instruments as of the end of the previous financial year.
- ii) Root cause analysis of the complaints received was undertaken to identify the major concerns, systemic issues and to formulate remedial measures to address the concerns.

C. Way Forward

As announced in the [Monetary Policy Statement on February 5, 2021](#), the three Ombudsman Schemes are being merged and integrated into a single scheme which will be rolled out starting from June 2021. The capabilities of the CMS will be enhanced for more efficient grievance redress. A framework for consumer education will be put in place to meet the needs arising from increased digitalisation in the banking space.

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