MOVING FROM THE MANUAL SYSTEM OF ANNUAL PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL REPORT (APAR) TO SMART PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL REPORT RECORDING ONLINE WINDOW (SPARROW) SYSTEM FOR THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT OFFICERS

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ABSTRACT
The performance of individual employees belonging to the various departments and the public organizations is now assessed and monitored by the online Performance Appraisal System replacing the confidential report writing. The Government of India introduced the electronic Annual Smart Performance Appraisal Report Recording Online Window (SPARROW) system for the Central Government officers. This system looks after management of Performance details and submission of reports to the appropriate authority for each member of the State Government/ Central Government service. This paper proposes a detailed study regarding moving from the manual system of Annual Performance Appraisal Report (APAR) to Smart Performance Appraisal Report Recording Online Window (SPARROW) system for the central government officers. The performance measured against factors like job knowledge, leadership initiative, quality of work, co-operation, judgmental capacity, job diversification, supervision abilities, health Performance and Process of Review provides better participation and accountability for the officers. On the basis of this background, this study is done to understand the different stages of earlier manual system and the current time bound online system. The Officer Reporting Upon, the Reporting Officer and the Review Officer at different stages were provided online platform which is not only user friendly but also allows to file and maintain the comprehensive performance appraisal dossier anywhere anytime as per their convenience. This system is useful to reduce prolonged delays in submission of completed annual performance appraisal reports. This study is based on changes in appraisal practice and to understand the appraisal related rules and policies. The improved fairness and its positive effects on the level of satisfaction, motivation and performance, can enhance employee's career and contribute the human resource development.

Keywords: Performance Appraisal, Annual Performance Appraisal Report (APAR), Smart Performance Appraisal Report Recording Online Window (SPARROW), Officer Reporting Upon (Appraisee), the Reporting Officer, the Review Officer, Referral Board, Accepting Authority.

INTRODUCTION
The Confidential Report is an important document providing the basic and vital inputs necessary for assessing the annual performance of employee for his/her advancement in official career. The Performance Appraisal Report (PAR) is an important document and the filing of PAR starts at the beginning of the financial year. It provides the basic and vital inputs for the further development of an officer. The Officer Reporting Upon (Appraisee), fills the PAR for further submission to the Reporting Authority. The PAR moves further to the Reviewing Officer. Finally, PAR is submitted to The Accepting Authority. At each stage, the concerned officer should undertake the duty of filling up the form with a high sense of responsibility. Reporting Officers should realize that the objective is to develop an officer so that he/she realizes his/her true potential. This process is not only a fault-finding process but is a development oriented one. The report is written annually at the end of the financial year on

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every employee in the form prescribed for the purpose by appraising the performance, character, conduct, qualities and attitude of the concerned employee. Moving from manual submission of Annual Performance Report to the electronic system of recording and movement of APAR forms provides seamless, speedy and user-friendly convenient system. There are in-built alert mechanisms at the different stages of filing APAR. The system also provides status check on periodical basis so that the officers involved know the pending stage of APAR. The system reduces inordinate delays in submission of completed APARs.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE
The researcher has carried out of literature on performance appraisal. The relevant parts   of the literature reviewed are presented in the following:
1. Review of Books.
2. Review of Doctoral Theses.
3. Review of Research Journals and Articles.
4. Review of Committee Reports.
V.S.P Rao (2007)[5,] according to him, performance Appraisal Systems are designed to improve performance, which broadly cover three areas define performance, facilitate performance and encourage performance. He says that the appraisal systems are made for a variety of development and administrative purpose. He has explained three types of Appraisal methods used, Individual Evaluation Method, Multiple Person Evaluation Methods and other methods, including HRA, Assessment centre and 360 degree feedback etc.
Dr. Madhurima Lall and Sakina Qasim Zaidi (2008)[6], mentioned the objective of performance Appraisal as compensation decision, promotion decision, training and development program, feedback and personal development. They have classified the performance appraisal process into 6 steps, they are categorized that the method of performance appraisal as cost oriented and future oriented. Future oriented includes: 1. Management by objectives, 2. 360 degree Appraisal, 3. Psychological and 4. Assessment centre. Performance interview and feedback also carry important role in performance appraisal system.
A.M.Sarma (1996)[7] He has defined performance appraisal as "It is a process of estimating or judging the value, excellent qualities or status of a person or thing". It is a process of collecting, analyzing and evaluating data related to job behavior and results of individuals. He has described two types of performance Appraisals: 1. Close ended Appraisal system and 2. Open ended Appraisal system. He expressed his views as performance Appraisal System has to be designed keeping in view the culture and requirement of an organization.
Nidhi Arora and Poonam Arora (2010)[8] They have suggested that the standard should be clearly communicated and every employee should be made aware that what exactly is expected of him.. One of the important reasons for having performance appraisal is to establish and uphold the principle of accountability.

METHODOLOGY
Current / Modern Methods of Performance Appraisal:
Listed below are the current/modern methods of appraisal:
1. Management by Objectives (MBO) Method:
Conceived by the legendary Peter F. Drucker in 1954, in his book 'The Practice of Management,' he called this concept "Management by Objectives and Self Control." Organizations adopt this approach on a large scale.

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MBO was born from the need to overcome the challenges of traditional appraisal methods. These methods were not very collaborative, gave limited employee control and were heavily susceptible to the biases and subjectivity. McGregor also pointed out that MBO takes away much of the focus from the personal traits of the employee and focuses more on the employee's actual performance.

The process of MBO can be broadly explained in these steps:

i. Define Organizational Goals:
Organizations evaluate their strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) and decide what they want to accomplish in a certain period. They define organizational goals.

ii. Define Employee Objectives:
The manager and the employee, after consultation based on organizational goal collectively set individual goals. These goals   are to be specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound. They are also commonly known as SMART goals. The criteria for measuring the employee's performance standard and the criteria for goal achievement are defined.

iii. Performance Review:
To review the progress of employees, meetings are held periodically. Identification of challenges is done, and means to tackle them are decided.

iv. Providing Feedback:
Before the end of the evaluation period, the employee is given feedback on the performance during the performance review. The employee thereby learns the advantages and drawbacks.

v. Performance Appraisal:
At the end of the evaluation period, the achievements of the employee are measured. A rating or grade is awarded to the employee based on the achievement. Joint goal-setting, feedback and review are the ingredients of MBO.

2. Behaviourally-Anchored Rating Scale (BARS):
There are behaviors attached to every job that can be expected from a group of employees that perform essential tasks. These behaviors are rated for each employee. They are anchored to points on a rating scale which may indicate the character of the response. For example some of traits would be, "Outstanding," "Excellent," "Good," "Average" or "Unsatisfactory."

3. Assessment Centres:
Assessment centres are used to put the middle management to senior management levels managers through various job-related simulations like interviews, group discussions, in-basket exercises, and presentations. These assessments are carried out by evaluators consisting of senior and experienced managers, psychologists, and HR experts. The tough method of appraisal is used to measure managerial, technical and behavioral competencies of high-potential individuals in the organization. They are mostly assessed on conflict management, strategic planning, organizational skills interpersonal skills etc.

4. 360-Degree Feedback:
Employees are evaluated by supervisors, stakeholders like seniors, peers, team members, subordinates, even themselves. By survey questionnaires feedback on the employee is collected. This method is undertaken to determine training and development needs. In this method the chances of receiving honest feedback, overall, are higher.

5. 720-Degree Feedback:
This concept is a step ahead of the 360-Degree Feedback. The employee is assessed by groups outside the organization along with stakeholders within the organization. They include clients, customers, suppliers, job workers, investors, etc. A more comprehensive evaluation of the employee's performance is done by this method.

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6. Human Resource Accounting Method:

All employees cost means not only the value of their salary, but also the cost of their recruitment, selection, induction, boarding, training, replacement, relocation costs, other compensations, benefits, etc. Even overheads like office equipments, laptops etc. are included into this cost. The monetary contribution of the employee is calculated as an asset of the organization. The net contribution of the employee in terms of money is then determined by calculating the difference between the employee's cost and returns received. This is a newer method still in developing stage.

7. Psychological Analysis:

The employee evaluated based on psychological tests, interviews, and observations. The information obtained from other appraisal methods and supervisors is considered. The future potential of the employee is evaluated through the psychological profile. This method considers the potential of the employee along with employee's past performance.

8. Customer Feedback:

This method links employee performance entirely to customer feedback. Organization sales force performance is evaluated by customer response.

SOURCES OF DATA

The types of data collected were:

i. Primary data:

It is the data which is collected for once own research purpose. The primary data was collected through informal discussion & it is interpreted. The discussions were framed so as to gain maximum firsthand knowledge from officers, which were analyzed in order to arrive at suitable conclusion. The primary data was collected through informal discussions with officers of various departments. Informal discussions were held with various employees in the Government offices, especially in the Personnel department & the Training department. This helped me to gain additional information, not only relating to the subject of my research but also other functions and activities.

ii. Secondary data:

Secondary data were collected from past records and manual of the various departments, books, internet etc. It is the data already collected, which is made available for reference purposes. In my research the secondary sources used are, various files and records maintained by various Governmental departments.

RESULTS

The APAR system is presented here in a descriptive way, the basis of which is review of documents so as to realize it`s working and the actual procedure taken place. The features of APAR system assessed are the source of APAR, the purpose of APAR writing, the feedback and qualitative goal achievement, transparent and fairness of system, the provision for representation, remedies for justified correction.

Framework of manual Annual Performance Appraisal Report(APAR) System:

To improve the performance evaluation and appraisal of all officers and for better human resource management, for the first time the Annual Confidential Roll (ACR) Rules were replaced by the All India Services(Performance Appraisal) Rules,2007. The Department of Personnel & Training, Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions, Government of India, New Delhi vide its Office Memorandum No.210/11/1/2005-Estt(A) (Pt.1I) dated 14-05-2009 and dated 23-07-2009 circulated instructions on preparation and maintenance of Annual Performance Assessment Reports (APAR). The existing system of Annual Confidential Reports was modified as Annual Performance Assessment Report (APAR), which was implemented from the assessment year 2011-2012.

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Numerical grading is to be awarded by Reporting and Reviewing Authorities for the quality of work output, personal attributes and functional competence of the officer reported upon. These should be on a scale of 1-10. The overall grade on a score of 1-10 will be based on 40% weightage on assessment of work output, and 30% on each for assessment of personal attributes and functional competency. The overall grading will be based on addition of the mean value of each group of indicators in proportion to the weightage assigned. The time schedule for preparation and completion of APAR should be followed strictly. The full APAR including the overall grade and with assessment of integrity shall be communicated to the concerned officer after the Report is complete. The concerned officer shall be given the-opportunity to make any representation against the entries and the final grading given in the Report within a period of fifteen days from the, date of receipt of the entries in the APAR. If the concerned APAR Section does not receive any information from the concerned officer on or before fifteen days from the date of disclosure , the APAR will be treated as final. The competent authority after due consideration may reject the representation, or may accept and modify the APAR accordingly. The overall grading will be based on addition of the mean value of each group of indicators in proportion to weightage assigned. 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 and reviewing authorities should rate the officer against a larger population of his/her peers that may be currently working under them. APARs graded between 8 and 10 will be rated as 'outstanding' and will be given a score of 9 for the purpose of calculating average scores for empanelment/promotion. APARs graded between 6 and short of 8 will he rated as 'very good' and will be given a score of 7. APARs graded between 4 and 6 short of 6 will be rated as 'good' and given a score of 5. APARs graded below 4 will be given a score of zero.

Section wise weightage is given as follows.---

A. Assessment of work output:
Weightage to this Section would be 40%. Reporting Authority and Reviewing Authority gives grading for:
 i) Accomplishment of planned work/work allotted as per subjects allotted.
 ii) Quality of output.
 iii) Analytical ability.
 (iv)Accomplishment of exceptional work / unforeseen tasks performed.

B) Assessment of personal attributes:
Weightage to this Section would be 30%. Reporting Authority and Reviewing Authority gives grading for:
i) Attitude to work.
ii) Sense of responsibility.
iii) Maintenance of Discipline.
iv) Communication skills.
v) Leadership qualities.
vi) Capacity to work in team spirit.
vii) Capacity to work in time limit.
viii) Inter-personal relations.

C) Assessment of functional competency:
Weightage to this Section would be 30%. Reporting Authority and Reviewing Authority gives grading for:
i) Knowledge of Rules / Regulations /Procedures in the area of function and ability to apply them correctly.

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ii) Strategic planning ability.
iii) Decision making ability.
iv) Ability to coordinate.
v) Ability to motivate and develop subordinates.
Time schedule for preparation/completion of APAR (Reporting year is Financial year) is as follows:
1. Distribution of blank APAR forms to all concerned up to 31st March.
2. Submission of self-appraisal to reporting officer by officer to be reported upon (where applicable) up to 15 April.
3. Submission of report by reporting officer to reviewing officer up to 30th June.
4. Report to be completed by Reviewing Officer and to be sent to Administration or CR Section/Cell or accepting authority, wherever provided up to 31st July.
5. Appraisal by accepting authority wherever provided up to 31st August.
6. (a) Disclosure to the officer reported upon where there is no accepting authority up to 1st September.
(b) Disclosure to the officer reported upon where there is accepting authority up to 15th September.
7. Receipt of representation, if any, on APAR within 15 days from the date of receipt of communication.
8. Forwarding of representations to the competent authority
(a) Where there is no accepting authority for APAR upto 21st September.
(b) Where there is accepting authority for APAR upto 6th October.
9. Disposal of representation by the competent Authority within one month from the date of receipt representation.
10. Communication of the decision of the competent authority on the representation by the APAR Cell upto 15th November.
11. End of entire APAR process, after which the APAR will be finally taken on record up to 30th November.

Framework of Smart Performance Appraisal Report Recording Online Window(SPARROW) system:
The Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances promotes and supports e-Governance initiatives in Government. It also collaborates with Department of information technology in the implementation of National e-governance Policy (NeGP), and is also implementing a Mission Mode Project of E-office which is looking at a less paper environment in Central Government offices and improving its operational efficiency.
In **Section I,** Basic Information is filed by Administration division/ Personnel Dept. Appraisee files his self-appraisal. Appraisal is done by Reporting officer/ Review Officer. Review is done by Review Officer. Information on the present grade or pay-scale as well as present post is mentioned. In the table relating to reporting and review authorities the name and designation of the reporting and review authorities should be mentioned so that the appraisee is clear about whom to send the report to. The period of absence from duty, on leave, training, or for other reasons, should also be mentioned in the table. Details of the training attended should be mentioned.

In **Section II**, the appraisee should mention, in 100 words duties and responsibilities of his designated post. Officers are required to develop a specific work plan for the financial year. This exercise is to be carried out at the beginning of the year, typically within the first 15 days. The work plan agreed upon at the beginning of the year has to again be reviewed or modified during the month of September/October as a mid-year exercise. It is not necessary that the work plan should be entirely

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quantitative in nature. It would be adequate to indicate specific work proposed and indicate one item in which he/she thought that significant contributions are made. The officer should record factors that helped   perform or hindered the   performance and also mention the need to upgrade skills and attend training programs. Provision for submission of property return is mandatory. An annual work plan with all his/her immediate subordinate officers should be formulated. In case the annual performance report of any subordinate officer could not be submitted, the reasons for the same should to be indicated.

Section-III is regarding the actual appraisal and is to be recorded by the reporting authority. The reporting authority must first indicate the actual period, out of the year under report, during which the appraisee has served under him/her. Section III then requires the reporting authority to comment on section II as filled out by the appraisee, and specifically state whether he/she agrees with the responses relating the work done. The reporting authority should highlight the specific portions with which he/she is unable to agree and the reasons for such disagreement. He should also highlight Skill up gradation needs as identified by the officer, in case the reporting officer agrees with the training needs indicated by the appraisee. In case, he/she disagrees with the appraisee, he/she should record his/her reasons for such disagreement.

The reporting authority should record a numerical grade in respect of the workout put of the appraisee both in respect of the planned work as well as the targets or tasks, a numerical grade is also required in respect of the "quality" of the output, the funds management, the time taken and whether the laid down rules/procedures have been adhered to in accomplishing the tasks required. The reporting authority has to record a numerical grade in respect of certain personal attributes and functional competencies. The reporting officer also has to comment on the integrity of the appraisee. The moral, financial and intellectual integrity of the appraisee should be judged. If the Officers integrity is beyond doubt, it may be stated. If there is any doubt or suspicion, the column should be left blank. A separate secret note should be recorded and followed up. A copy of the note should also be sent together with the Confidential Report to the next superior officer who will ensure that the follow up action is taken expeditiously. The officer's integrity should be certified and an entry made accordingly in the Confidential Report. If there are doubts or suspicions then after confirmation it should be recorded and duly communicated to the concern officer. The reporting authority is required to comment on the attitude of the appraisee towards Scheduled Castes and Tribes. The reporting authority is required to record an overall grade in the scale of 1-10.

Section IV -This section is to be filled up by the reviewing authority and is self-explanatory. The reviewing authority is first required to indicate the time for which the appraisee has served. The assessments made by the reporting officer are reviewed by him. The reviewing authority may record his/her own assessment against the work output or any of the attributes. The reviewing authority is required to record an overall grade in the scale of 1-10.

Numerical grades are to be awarded by reporting and reviewing authorities 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. Similarly, any grade of 9 or 10 would be justified with specific achievements. Grades of 1-2 or 9-10 are rare instances and hence the need to justify them.

Under the performance appraisal system (SPARROW), the entire appraisal is now required to be revealed to the appraisee. The final report is required to be communicated to the appraisee, after the review officer has recorded his remarks and overall grade. The appraisee may submit a representation against any adverse observation. It is expected that such a representation would only

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be against factual observations and not any subjective assessment of the reporting and reviewing authority. In case the reporting or review authorities, being satisfied with the representation made by the appraisee, the changes are made. The cadre controlling authority would place the representation along-with any remarks made by the reporting and review authorities, on the representation, before a "Referral Board" to be specifically constituted. The decision of the Referral Board would be final.

DISCUSSION

The intention of actual achievement of objectives of APAR are more prominent in the present system. More flexibility is added to the work plan agreed for the year by incorporating the relative annual work rhythm and budgetary cycle. A mid-year review exercise during the month of September/October is included in work plan. Based on this review the work plan may undergo some changes from that originally prepared. It is not necessary that the work plan should be entirely quantitative in nature. For field level posts, the work plan would consist essentially of quantifiable targets. For Head office level posts it would consist of policy objectives to be achieved.

In this system, cognizance regarding significant contributions made by the officers is reflected prominently even in activities otherwise regarded as routine in nature. Also there would be a premium on competency and skill up gradation. Regarding integrity, not only financial integrity is considered, but also moral and intellectual integrity of the officer reported upon, is taken into account. There is more accuracy and fairness in the present APAR system than the earlier manual APAR system. The earlier system was more formality or ritual based wherein hardly the officer got to know about their performance. In the present system, the feedback intimation with a time bound framework brings improved performance. The positive aspects and motivational appreciation along with recognition creates positive grading to the present system. Though the promotion decisions are based on seniority, the framework and the format of present APAR provides strong linkage with the higher authorities of the administration. Earlier the grades were based on personal relationship of the officer with the higher authorities than the actual performance. Now the present system is implemented on transparent and fair display of grades bringing satisfaction and motivation to the officer. The development of the officer's career has become more fruitful through the present system by identifying their strength, weaknesses and available opportunities. The purpose and source of the appraisal provides positive interaction among the employees for effective and innovative performance. In the earlier system, the influence of personal relationships was creating bias and absence of active participation of the officers. The process of learning and development was restricted due this trend which ultimately fails to achieve the targeted development of the employees. The current system introduced the time bound and online validation of the appraisal report by the concerned officer to restrict patronage or partiality as a result of relationship between appraiser and appraisee.

CONCLUSION

The effectiveness of the current APAR system is contributing for the correct evaluation of the employee to achieve objective of employee and career development. We also suggest that the appraiser and the appraisee should have frequent and timely communication regarding the completion of yearly work plan. Instead of adverse feedbacks there should be constructive feedback to improve the weaknesses and sustain the strengths of the employees. The communication between the appraiser and appraise must be on mutual understanding and function in both ways. The training needs of the officers, with periodical and consistent identification of the specific areas must be highlighted. Therefore, the online APAR is important to evaluate each employee's competency, merit, abilities and his/her value for the organizational development.

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