

**THE PUNJAB OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSMAN ACT, 1997
(X of 1997)**

CONTENTS

1. Short title, extent and commencement
2. Definitions
3. Appointment of Ombudsman
4. Tenure of the Ombudsman
5. Ombudsman not to hold any other office of profit, etc
6. Terms and conditions of service and remuneration of Ombudsman
7. Acting Ombudsman
8. Appointment and terms and conditions of service of staff
9. Jurisdiction, functions and powers of the Ombudsman
10. Procedure and evidence
11. Recommendations for implementation
12. Defiance of recommendations
13. Reference by Ombudsman
14. Powers of the Ombudsman
15. Power to enter and search any premises
16. Power to punish for contempt
17. Inspection Team
18. Standing Committees, etc
19. Delegation of powers
20. Appointment of advisors, etc
21. Authorization of functionaries, etc
22. Award of costs and compensation and refund of amounts
23. Assistance and advice to Ombudsman

24. **Conduct of business**
25. **Requirement of affidavits**
26. **Remuneration of advisors, consultants, etc**
27. **Ombudsman and staff to be public servants**
28. **Annual and other reports**
29. **Bar of jurisdiction**
30. **Immunity**
31. **Reference by the Government**
32. **Representation to Governor**
33. **Informal resolution of disputes**
34. **Service of process**
35. **Expenditure to be charged on Provincial Consolidated Fund**
36. **Rules**
37. **Act to override other laws**
38. **Removal of difficulties**
39. **Repeal**

SCHEDULES

1. **FIRST SCHEDULE**
2. **SECOND SCHEDULE**

TEXT

¹THE PUNJAB OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSMAN ACT 1997

(X of 1997)

[1st July, 1997]

**An
Act**

to provide for the establishment of the office of Ombudsman in the Province of the Punjab.

Preamble.— WHEREAS it is expedient to provide for the appointment of the Provincial Ombudsman for protection of the rights of the people, ensuring adherence to the rule of law, diagnosing, redressing and rectifying any injustice done to a person through maladministration and suppressing corrupt practices.

It is hereby enacted as follows:—

1. Short title, extent and commencement.— (1) This Act may be called the Punjab Office of the Ombudsman Act 1997.

(2) It extends to the Province of the Punjab.

(3) It shall come into force at once.

2. Definitions.— In this Act, unless there is anything repugnant in the subject or context—

(1) “Agency” means a Department, Commission or office of the Provincial Government or a statutory corporation or other institution established or controlled by the Provincial Government but does not include the High Court and courts working under the supervision and control of the High Court, and the Provincial Assembly of the Punjab and its Secretariat.

(2) “maladministration” includes—

(i) a decision, process, recommendation, act or omission or commission which—

(a) is contrary to law, rules or regulations or is a departure from established practice or procedure, unless it is bonafide and for valid reasons; or

(b) is perverse, arbitrary or unreasonable, unjust, biased, oppressive, or discriminatory; or

(c) is based on irrelevant grounds; or

(d) involves the exercise of powers or the failure or refusal to do so, for corrupt or improper motives, such as, bribery,

¹This Act was passed by the Punjab Assembly on 25th June, 1997; assented to by the Governor of the Punjab on 27th June, 1997; and, was published in the Punjab Gazette (Extraordinary), dated 30th June, 1997 (pages 1015 to 1024).

jobbery, favouritism, nepotism and administrative excesses;
and

- (ii) neglect, inattention, delay, incompetence, inefficiency and ineptitude, in the administration or discharge of duties and responsibilities;
- (3) "Office" means the office of the Ombudsman;
- (4) "Ombudsman" means the Ombudsman for the Province of Punjab appointed under section 3;
- (5) "Prescribed" means prescribed by rules made under this Act;
- (6) "Public servant" means a public servant as defined in section 21 of the Pakistan Penal Code 1860, and includes a Minister, Advisor, Parliamentary Secretary and the Chief Executive, Director or other officer or employee or member of an Agency; and
- (7) "Staff" means any employee or commissioner of the Office and includes co-opted members of the staff, consultants, advisors, bailiffs, liaison officers and experts.

3. Appointment of Ombudsman.— (1) There shall be an Ombudsman, for the Province of Punjab who shall be appointed by the Government.

(2) An Ombudsman shall be a person who is, or has been or is qualified to be a judge of the High Court ²[or any other] person of known integrity.

(3) Before entering upon office, the Ombudsman shall take an oath before the Governor in the form set out in the First Schedule to this Act.

(4) The Ombudsman shall, in all matters, perform his functions and exercise his powers fairly, honestly, diligently and independently of the Executive and all executive authorities throughout the Province shall act in aid of the Ombudsman.

4. Tenure of the Ombudsman.— (1) The Ombudsman shall hold office for a period of ³[four] years and shall not be eligible for any extension of tenure or for re-appointment as Ombudsman under any circumstances⁴[:]

⁵[Provided that a sitting Judge of the High Court working as Ombudsman may be called back by the competent authority before expiry of his tenure.]

(2) The Ombudsman may resign his office by writing under his hand addressed to the Governor.

5. Ombudsman not to hold any other office of profit, etc.— (1) The Ombudsman shall not—

²Substituted for the words "and is" by the Punjab Office of the Ombudsman (Amendment) Act 2003 (III of 2003), w.e.f. 10.2.2003, s.2; and published in the Punjab Gazette (Extraordinary), pages 271-272.

³Substituted for the word 'three' by the Punjab Office of the Ombudsman (Amendment) Act 2003 (III of 2003), w.e.f. 10.2.2003, s.3; and published in the Punjab Gazette (Extraordinary), pages 271-272.

⁴Substituted for the "full-stop" by the Punjab Office of the Ombudsman (Amendment) Act 2003 (III of 2003), w.e.f. 10.2.2003, s.3; and published in the Punjab Gazette (Extraordinary), pages 271-272.

⁵Added by the Punjab Office of the Ombudsman (Amendment) Act 2003 (III of 2003), w.e.f. 10.2.2003, s.3; and published in the Punjab Gazette (Extraordinary), pages 271-272.

- (a) hold any other office of profit in the service of Pakistan; or
- (b) occupy any other position carrying the right to remuneration for the rendering of services.

(2) The Ombudsman⁶ [, not being a sitting Judge of the High Court,] shall not hold any office of profit in the service of Pakistan⁷ [* * *] before the expiration of two years after he has ceased to hold that office nor shall he be eligible during the tenure of office and for a period of two years thereafter for election as a member of Parliament or a Provincial Assembly or any local body or take part in any political activity.

6. Terms and conditions of service and remuneration of Ombudsman.— (1) The Ombudsman shall be entitled to such salary, allowances and privileges and other terms and conditions of service as the Government may determine and these terms shall not be varied during the term of office of an Ombudsman.

(2) The Ombudsman may be removed from office by the Government on the ground of misconduct or of being incapable of properly performing the duties of his office by reason of physical or mental incapacity. The Government shall provide the Ombudsman a copy of charges before such an order⁸[:]

Provided that the Ombudsman, may, if he sees fit and appropriate to refute any charges, request an open public evidentiary hearing before a Division Bench of the High Court and if such hearing is not held within thirty days from the date of the receipt of such request or not concluded within ninety days of its receipt, the Ombudsman will be absolved of all stigma. In such circumstances, the Ombudsman may choose to leave his office and shall be entitled to receive full remuneration and benefits for the rest of his term.

(3) If the Ombudsman makes a request under the proviso to sub-section (2), he shall not perform his functions under this Act until the hearing before the High Court has concluded.

(4) An Ombudsman removed from office on the ground of misconduct shall not be eligible to hold any office of profit in the service of Pakistan or for election as a member of Parliament or a Provincial Assembly or any local body, unless a period of four years has elapsed since his dismissal.

7. Acting Ombudsman.— At any time when the office of Ombudsman is vacant, or the Ombudsman is absent or is unable to perform his functions due to any cause, the Government shall appoint an acting Ombudsman.

8. Appointment and terms and conditions of service of staff.— (1) The members of the staff, other than those mentioned in section 20 or those of a class specified by the Government by order in writing shall be appointed by the Government in consultation with the Ombudsman.

⁶Inserted by the Punjab Office of the Ombudsman (Amendment) Act 2003 (III of 2003), w.e.f. 10.2.2003, s.4; and published in the Punjab Gazette (Extraordinary), pages 271-272.

⁷Omitted the words "or the Province" by the Punjab Office of the Ombudsman (Amendment) Act 2003 (III of 2003), w.e.f. 10.2.2003, s.4; and published in the Punjab Gazette (Extraordinary), pages 271-272.

⁸Misprinted in the Gazette as "full-stop".

(2) It shall not be necessary to consult the Provincial Public Service Commission for making appointment of the members of the staff or on matters relating to qualifications for such appointment and method of their recruitment.

(3) The members of the staff shall be entitled to such salary, allowances and other terms and conditions of service as may be prescribed having regard to salary, allowances and other terms and conditions of service that may for the time being be admissible to other employees of the Provincial Government in the corresponding Basic Pay Scale.

(4) Before entering upon office a member of the staff mentioned in subsection (1) shall take an Oath before the Ombudsman in the form set out in the Second Schedule to this Act.

9. Jurisdiction, functions and powers of the Ombudsman.— (1) The Ombudsman may on a complaint by any aggrieved person, on a reference by the Government or the Provincial Assembly, or on a motion of the Supreme Court or the High Court made during the course of any proceedings before it or of his own motion, undertake any investigation into any allegation of maladministration on the part of any Agency or any of its officers or employees:

Provided that the Ombudsman shall not have any jurisdiction to investigate or inquire into any matters which—

- (a) are sub judice before a Court of competent jurisdiction on the date of the receipt of a complaint, reference or motion by him; or
- (b) relate to the external affairs of Pakistan or the relations or dealings of Pakistan with any foreign state or Government; or
- (c) relate to, or are connected with, the defence of Pakistan or any part thereof, the Military, Naval and Air Forces of Pakistan, or the matters covered by the laws relating to those forces.

(2) Notwithstanding anything contained in subsection (1), the Ombudsman shall not entertain for investigation any complaint by or on behalf of a public servant or functionary concerning any matters relating to the Agency in which he is, or has been, working, in respect of any personal grievance relating to his service therein.

(3) For carrying out the objectives of this Act and, in particular for ascertaining the root causes of corrupt practices and injustice, the Ombudsman may arrange for studies to be made or research to be conducted and may recommend appropriate steps for their eradication.

10. Procedure and evidence.— (1) A complaint shall be made on solemn affirmation or oath and in writing addressed to the Ombudsman by the person aggrieved or, in the case of his death, by the legal representative and may be lodged in person at the Office or handed over to the Ombudsman in person or sent by any other means of communication to the Office.

(2) No anonymous or pseudonymous complaints shall be entertained.

(3) A complaint shall be made not later than three months from the day on which the person aggrieved first had the notice of the matter alleged in the complaint, but the Ombudsman may conduct any investigation pursuant to a complaint which is

not within time if he considers that there are special circumstances which make it proper for him to do so.

(4) Where the Ombudsman proposes to conduct an investigation he shall issue to the principal officer of the Agency concerned, and to any other person who is alleged in the complaint to have taken or authorized the action complained of, a notice calling upon him to meet the allegations contained in the complaint, including rebuttal:

Provided that the Ombudsman may proceed with the investigation if no response to the notice is received by him from such principal officer or other person within thirty days of the receipt of the notice or within such longer period as may have been allowed by the Ombudsman.

(5) Every investigation shall be conducted informally but, the Ombudsman may adopt such procedure as he considers appropriate for such investigation and he may obtain information from such persons and in such manner and make such inquiries as he thinks fit.

(6) A person shall be entitled to appear in person or be represented before the Ombudsman.

(7) The Ombudsman shall, in accordance with the rules made under this Act pay expenses and allowances to any person who attends or furnishes information for the purposes of an investigation.

(8) The conduct of an investigation shall not affect any action taken by the Agency concerned, or any power or duty of that Agency to take further action with respect to any matter subject to the investigation.

(9) For the purpose of an investigation under this Act the Ombudsman may require any officer or member of the Agency concerned to furnish any information or to produce any document which in the opinion of the Ombudsman is relevant and helpful in the conduct of the investigation and there shall be no obligation to maintain secrecy in respect of disclosure of any information or document for the purposes of such investigation:

Provided that the Government may, in its discretion, on grounds of its being a State secret, allow a claim of privilege with respect to any information or document.

(10) In any case where the Ombudsman decides not to conduct an investigation, he shall send to the complainant a statement of his reasons for not conducting the investigation.

(11) Save as otherwise provided in this Act, the Ombudsman shall regulate the procedure for the conduct of business or the exercise of powers under this Act.

11. Recommendations for implementation.— (1) If, after having considered a matter on his own motion, or on a complaint or on a reference by the Government or the Provincial Assembly, or on a motion by the Supreme Court or the High Court, as the case may be, the Ombudsman is of the opinion that the matter considered amounts to maladministration, he shall communicate his finding to the Agency concerned—

(a) to consider the matter further;

- (b) to modify or cancel the decision, process, recommendation, act or omission;
- (c) to explain more fully the act or decision in question;
- (d) to take disciplinary action against any public servant of any Agency under the relevant laws applicable to him;
- (e) to dispose of the matter or case within a specified time; and
- (f) to take any other steps specified by the Ombudsman.

(2) The Agency shall, within such time as may be specified by the Ombudsman, inform him about the action taken on his direction or the reasons for not complying with the same.

(3) In any case where the Ombudsman has considered a matter, or conducted an investigation, on a complaint or on reference by the Government or the Provincial Assembly or on a motion by the Supreme Court or the High Court, the Ombudsman shall forward a copy of the communication received by him from the Agency in pursuance of sub-section (2) to the complainant or, as the case may be, the Government, the Provincial Assembly, the Supreme Court or the High Court.

(4) If, after conducting an investigation, it appears to the Ombudsman that an injustice has been caused to the person aggrieved in consequence of maladministration and that the injustice has not been or will not be remedied, he may, if he thinks fit, lay a special report on the case before the Government.

(5) If the Agency concerned does not comply with the recommendations of the Ombudsman or does not give reasons to the satisfaction of the Ombudsman for non-compliance, it shall be treated as "Defiance of Recommendations" and shall be dealt with as hereinafter provided.

12. Defiance of recommendations.— (1) If there is a 'Defiance of Recommendations' by any public servant in any Agency with regard to the implementation of a recommendation given by the Ombudsman, the Ombudsman may refer the matter to the Government which may, in its discretion, direct the Agency to implement the recommendation and inform the Ombudsman accordingly.

(2) In each instance of 'Defiance of Recommendations' a report by the Ombudsman shall become a part of the personal file or character roll of the public servant primarily responsible for the defiance:

Provided that the public servant concerned had been granted an opportunity to be heard in the matter.

13. Reference by Ombudsman.— Where, during or after an inspection or an investigation, the Ombudsman is satisfied that any person is guilty of any allegations as referred to in subsection (1) of section 9, the Ombudsman may refer the case to the concerned authority for appropriate corrective or disciplinary action, or both and the said authority shall inform the Ombudsman within thirty days of the receipt of reference of the action taken. If no information is received within this period, the Ombudsman may bring the matter to the notice of the Government for such action as he may deem fit.

14. Powers of the Ombudsman.— (1) The Ombudsman shall, for the purposes of this Act have the same powers as are vested in a Civil Court under the Code of Civil Procedure, 1908, in respect of the following matters, namely:—

- (a) summoning and enforcing the attendance of any person and examining him on oath;
- (b) compelling the production of documents;
- (c) receiving evidence on affidavits; and
- (d) issuing commission for the examination of witnesses.

(2) The Ombudsman shall have the power to require any person to furnish information on such points or matters as, in the opinion of the Ombudsman, may be useful for, or relevant to, the subject-matter of any inspection or investigation.

(3) The powers referred to in sub-section (1) may be exercised by the Ombudsman or any person authorized in writing by the Ombudsman in this behalf while carrying out an inspection or investigation under the provisions of this Act.

(4) Where the Ombudsman finds the complaint referred to in sub-section (1) of section 9 to be false, frivolous or vexatious, he may award reasonable compensation to the Agency, public servant or other functionary against whom the complaint was made; and the amount of such compensation shall be recoverable from the complainant as arrears of land revenue:

Provided that the award of compensation under this subsection shall not debar the aggrieved person from seeking any other remedy.

(5) If any Agency, public or other functionary fails to comply with a direction of the Ombudsman, he may, in addition to taking other actions under this Act, refer the matter to the appropriate authority for taking disciplinary action against the person who disregarded the direction of the Ombudsman.

(6) If the Ombudsman has reason to believe that any public servant or other functionary has acted in a manner warranting criminal or disciplinary proceedings against him, he may refer the matter to the appropriate authority for necessary action to be taken within the time specified by the Ombudsman.

(7) The staff and the nominees of the Office may be commissioned by the Ombudsman to administer oaths for the purposes of this Act and to attest various affidavits, affirmations or declarations which shall be admitted in evidence in all proceedings under this Act without proof of the signature or seal or official character of such person.

15. Power to enter and search any premises.— (1) The Ombudsman, or any member of the staff authorized in this behalf, may, for the purpose of making any inspection or investigation, enter any premises where the Ombudsman or, as the case may be, such member has reason to believe that any article, books of accounts, or any other documents relating to the subject-matter of inspection or investigation may be found, and may—

- (a) search such premises and inspect any article, books of accounts or other documents;
- (b) take extracts or copies of such books of accounts and documents;

- (c) impound or seal such articles, books of accounts and documents; and
- (d) make an inventory of such articles, books of account and other documents found in such premises.

(2) all searches made under subsection (1) shall be carried out *mutatis mutandis*, in accordance with the provisions of the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1898.

16. Power to punish for contempt.— (1) The Ombudsman shall have the same powers, *mutatis mutandis*, as the High Court has to punish any person for its contempt who—

- (a) abuses, interferes with, impedes, imperils, or obstructs the process of the Ombudsman in any way or disobeys any order of the Ombudsman;
- (b) scandalises the Ombudsman or otherwise does anything which tends to bring the Ombudsman, his staff or nominees or any person authorised by the Ombudsman in relation to his office, into hatred, ridicule or contempt;
- (c) does anything which tends to prejudice the determination of a matter pending before the Ombudsman; or
- (d) does any other thing which , by any other law, constitutes contempt of Court:

Provided that fair comments made in good faith and in public interest on the working of the Ombudsman or any of his staff, or on the final report of the Ombudsman after the completion of the investigation shall not constitute contempt of the Ombudsman or his Office.

(2) Any person sentenced under subsection (1) may, notwithstanding anything herein contained, within thirty days on the passing of the order, appeal to the High Court.

17. Inspection Team.— (1) The Ombudsman may constitute an Inspection Team for the performance of any of the functions of the Ombudsman.

(2) An Inspection Team shall consist of one or more members of the staff and shall be assisted by such other person or persons as the Ombudsman may consider necessary.

(3) An Inspection Team shall exercise such of the powers of the Ombudsman as he may specify by order in writing and every report of the Inspection Team shall first be submitted to the Ombudsman with its recommendations for appropriate action.

18. Standing Committees, etc.— The Ombudsman may, whenever he thinks fit, establish standing or advisory committees at specified places with specified jurisdiction for performing such functions of the Ombudsman as are assigned to them from time to time and every report of such committee shall first be submitted to the Ombudsman with its recommendations for appropriate action.

19. Delegation of powers.— The Ombudsman may, by order in writing, delegate such of his powers as may be specified in the order, to any member of his staff or to a standing or advisory committee, to be exercised subject to such conditions as may

be specified and every report of such member or committee shall first be submitted to the Ombudsman with his or its recommendations for appropriate action.

20. Appointment of advisors, etc.– The Ombudsman may appoint competent persons of integrity as advisors, consultants, fellows, bailiffs, interns, commissioners and experts as well as ministerial staff with or without remuneration to assist him in the discharge of his duties under this Act.

21. Authorization of functionaries, etc.– The Ombudsman may, if he considers it expedient, authorise a District Judge or any agency, public servant or other functionary working under the administrative control of the Provincial Government to undertake the functions of the Ombudsman under subsection (1) or subsection (2) of section 14 in respect of any matter falling within his jurisdiction and it shall be the duty of the Agency, public servant or other functionary so authorised to undertake such functions to such extent and subject to such conditions as the Ombudsman may specify.

22. Award of costs and compensation and refund of amounts.– (1) The Ombudsman may, where he deems necessary, call upon a public servant, other functionary or any Agency to show cause why compensation be not awarded to an aggrieved party for any loss or damage suffered by him on account of any maladministration committed by such public servant, other functionary or Agency, and after considering the explanation, and hearing such public servant, other functionary or Agency, award reasonable costs or compensation and the same shall be recoverable as arrears of land revenue from the public servant, functionary or Agency.

(2) In cases involving payment of illegal gratification to any employee of any Agency, or to any other person on his behalf, or misappropriation, criminal breach of trust or cheating, the Ombudsman may order the payment thereof for credit to the Government or pass such other order as he may deem fit.

(3) An order made under subsection (2) against any person shall not absolve such person of any liability under any other law.

23. Assistance and advice to Ombudsman.– (1) The Ombudsman may seek the assistance of any person or authority for the performance of his functions under this Act.

(2) All officers of any Agency and any person whose assistance has been sought by the Ombudsman in the performance of his functions shall render such assistance to the extent it is within their power or capacity.

(3) No statement made by a person or authority in the course of giving evidence before the Ombudsman or his staff shall subject him to, or be used against him in any civil or criminal proceedings except for prosecution of such person for giving false evidence.

24. Conduct of business.– (1) The Ombudsman shall be the Chief Executive of the Office.

(2) The Ombudsman shall be the Principal Accounts Officer of the Office in respect of the expenditure incurred against budget grant or grants controlled by the

Ombudsman and shall, for this purpose, exercise all the financial and administrative powers delegated to an Administrative Department.

25. Requirement of affidavits.— (1) The Ombudsman may require any complainant or any party connected or concerned with a complaint, or with any inquiry or reference to submit affidavits attested or notarized before any competent authority in that behalf within the time prescribed by the Ombudsman or his staff.

(2) The Ombudsman may take evidence without technicalities and may also require complainants or witnesses to take lie detection tests to examine their veracity and credibility and draw such inferences that are reasonable in all circumstances of the case especially when a person refuses, without reasonable justification, to submit to such tests.

26. Remuneration of advisors consultants, etc.— (1) The Ombudsman may, in his discretion, fix an honorarium or remuneration for advisors, consultants, experts and interns engaged by him from time to time for the services rendered.

(2) The Ombudsman may, in his discretion fix a reward or remuneration to any person for exceptional services rendered, or valuable assistance given, to the Ombudsman in carrying out his functions:

Provided that the Ombudsman shall withhold the identity of that person, if so requested by the person concerned, and take steps to provide due protection under the law to such person against harassment, victimization, retribution, reprisals or retaliation.

27. Ombudsman and staff to be public servants.— The Ombudsman, the employees, officers and all other staff of the Office shall be deemed to be public servants within the meaning of section 21 of the Pakistan Penal Code, 1860.

28. Annual and other reports.— (1) Within three months of the conclusion of the calendar year to which the report pertains, the Ombudsman shall submit an Annual Report to the Governor.

(2) Simultaneously, such reports shall be released by the Ombudsman for publication and copies thereof shall be provided to the public at reasonable cost.

(3) The Ombudsman may also, from time to time, make public any of his studies, research, conclusions, recommendations, ideas or suggestions in respect of any matters being dealt with by the Office.

(4) The report and other documents mentioned in this section shall be placed before the Provincial Assembly as early as possible.

29. Bar of jurisdiction.— No Court or other authority shall have jurisdiction—

- (i) to question the validity of any action taken, or intended to be taken, or order made, or anything done or purporting to have been taken, made or done under this Act; or
- (ii) to grant an injunction or stay or to make any interim order in relation to any proceeding before, or anything done or intended to be done or purporting to have been done by, or under the orders or at the instance of the Ombudsman.

30. Immunity.— No suit, prosecution or other legal proceeding shall lie against the Ombudsman, his staff, Inspection Team, nominees, members of a standing or advisory committee or any person authorised by the Ombudsman for anything which is in good faith done or intended to be done under this Act.

31. Reference by the Government.— (1) The government may refer any matter, report or complaint for investigation and independent recommendations by the Ombudsman.

(2) The Ombudsman shall promptly investigate any such matter, report or complaint and submit his findings or opinion within a reasonable time.

(3) The Government, may, by notification in the Official Gazette, exclude specified matters, from the operation of any of provisions of this Act.

32. Representation to Governor.— Any person aggrieved by a decision or order of the Ombudsman may, within thirty days of the decision or order, make a representation to the Governor, who may pass such order thereon as he may deem fit.

33. Informal resolution of disputes.— (1) Notwithstanding anything contained in this Act, the Ombudsman and a member of the staff shall have the authority to informally conciliate, amicably resolve, stipulate, settle or ameliorate any grievance without written memorandum and without the necessity of docketing any complaint or issuing any official notice.

(2) The Ombudsman may appoint for purposes of liaison counselors, whether honorary or otherwise, at local level on such terms and conditions as the Ombudsman may deem proper.

34. Service of process.— (1) For the purposes of this Act, a written process or communication from the Office shall be deemed to have been duly served upon a respondent or any other person by, *inter alia*, anyone or more of the following methods, namely:—

- (i) by service in person through any employee of the Office or by any special process-server appointed in the name of the Ombudsman by any authorized staff of the Office, or any other person authorised in this behalf;
- (ii) by depositing in any mail box posting in any Post Office a postage prepaid copy of the process, or any other document under certificate of posting or by registered post acknowledgment due to the last known address of the respondent or person concerned in the record of the Office, in which case service shall be deemed to have been affected ten days after the aforesaid mailing;
- (iii) by a police officer or any employee or nominee of the Office leaving the process or document at the last known address, abode, or place of business of the respondent or person concerned and if no one is available at the aforementioned address, premises or place, by affixing a copy of the process or other document to the main entrance of such address; and

(iv) by publishing the process or document through any newspaper and sending a copy thereof to the respondent or the person concerned through ordinary mail, in which case service shall be deemed to have been effected on the day of the publication of the newspaper.

(2) In all matters involving service the burden of proof shall be upon a respondent to credibly demonstrate by assigning sufficient cause that he, in fact, had absolutely no knowledge of the process, and that he actually acted in good faith.

(3) Whenever a document or process from the office is mailed, the envelope or the package shall clearly bear the legend that it is from the Office.

35. Expenditure to be charged on Provincial Consolidated Fund.— The remuneration payable to the Ombudsman and the administrative expenses of the Office, including the remuneration payable to staff, nominees and grantees, shall be an expenditure charged upon the Provincial Consolidated Fund.

36. Rules.— The Ombudsman may, with the approval of the Government, make rules for carrying out the purposes of this Act.

37. Act to override other laws.— The provisions of this Act shall have effect notwithstanding anything contained in any other law for the time being in force.

38. Removal of difficulties.— If any difficulty arises in giving effect to any provision of this Act, the Government may make such order not inconsistent with the provisions of this Act as may appear to him to be necessary for the purpose of removing such difficulty.

39. Repeal.— The Punjab Office of the Ombudsman Ordinance 1997 (XIV of 1997) is hereby repealed.

FIRST SCHEDULE

[see section 3(3)]

I,.....do solemnly swear that I will bear true faith and allegiance to Pakistan.

That as Ombudsman for the Province of Punjab I will discharge my duties and perform my functions honestly, to the best of my ability, faithfully in accordance with the laws for the time being in force in the Province without fear or favour, affection or ill-will.

That I will not allow my personal interest to influence my official conduct or my official decisions;

That I shall do my best to promote the best interest of Pakistan and the Province of the Punjab.

And that I will not directly or indirectly communicate or reveal to any person any matter which shall be brought under my consideration, or shall become known to me, as Ombudsman, except as may be required for the due discharge of my duties as Ombudsman.

May Allah Almighty help and guide me (Ameen).

SECOND SCHEDULE

[see section 8(4)]

I,.....do solemnly swear that I will bear true faith and allegiance to Pakistan.

That as an employee of the office of the Ombudsman for the Province of Punjab, I will discharge my duties and perform my functions honestly, to the best of my ability, faithfully, in accordance with the laws for the time being in force in the Province, without fear or favour, affection, or ill-will;

That I will not allow my personal interest to influence my official conduct or my official decisions;

And that I will not directly or indirectly communicate or reveal to any person any matter which shall be brought under my consideration, or shall become known to me, as an employee of the office of the Ombudsman.

May Allah Almighty help and guide me (Ameen).