CHAPTER - 2
CITIZEN’S CHARTER: HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

2.0 AN OVERVIEW

India is a vast country with a diversified culture. Prof D N Bannerji opines, “Indian Constitution is federal in form but unitary in spirit.” The Central Government and the state Government work in compliance with the principles of Indian Constitution. According to the Constitution, there are special provisions to ensure the uniformity of the functioning of the administrative system at all levels and to maintain basic administrative standards. It declares India a sovereign, socialist, secular democrat crepublic, assuring its citizens justice, equality, and liberty, and endeavours to promote fraternity among them. Institutions of governance – the Parliament, the President, the Judiciary, the Executive, etc. get their power from the Constitution and are bound by it. The government organisations act as an instrument to exercise the powers in an administrative set-up where responsibility of running the administration is delegated at various levels of hierarchy and operated through checks and balances at various stages.

A constitutional democracy provides more empowerment to people. According to the famous quote of Abraham Lincoln, democracy is “government of the people, by the people, for the people.” In the real sense, “government of the people” and “government by the people” phrase is true but “government for the people” does not exhibit the true spirit of democracy in the functioning of the government organisations/ departments. It is incompatible with the Constitutional principles. Though several reforms have been adopted and policies introduced from time to time as per the need, but the administrators behave in feudal mind-set exhibiting the features like red

78 Preamble of the Constitution of India
tapism, corruption, nepotism, incompetence, mismanagement of administrative resources etc. Instead of acting as public servants, they show mark disconnect with the needs/requirements/problems of public at large. Being trustees of the public resources at their disposal, they start behaving as whimsical owners of the same resulting in inefficient use of the available resources (administrative, manpower, financial etc). As a result, people are fed up with the traditional working style of the government machinery. They are even ready to pay extra to the Public officials to get the work done. This practice has adversely affected accountability and increasing corruption. This has further worsened the bureaucratic structure of the administration resulting in the weakening of the democratic set-up.

Since independence, Indian administration has been facing numerable challenges such as low literacy rate, unemployment, population explosion, corruption, poor living standards, lack of basic facilities, social insecurity, injustice etc. The biggest problem is that the administration has failed to adjust itself to the present circumstances. With limited resources and unlimited challenges, it lacks the administrative capacity to deliver qualitative services to the citizens and meet their expectations. As the people are paying to the government directly or indirectly, in turn, they expect some basic minimum standards for the services they get from the administration. Moreover, they face many difficulties while dealing with the government officials to get the work done. This has widened the gap between the citizens and the government.

In this direction, the administration has started taking various steps to improve the citizen-administration relationship through various reforms. One such initiative is the introduction of Citizen’s Charter.

2.1 Concept of Citizen’s Charter and its relation to Good Governance

In the present world, due to the advancements in science & technology and rapid developments in terms of integrated world economy and information technology, the people are more empowered and enlightened. Moreover, the
**LPG** (Liberalisation, Privatisation and Globalisation) influence has made it difficult for the existing government set-up to cope up with the rapid changes affecting economical, political, technological and social sphere of activities of the country. The existing administrative machinery is incapable to face and find solution to the ever-increasing challenges and succeed in meeting high expectations of the people from the government. Administrators find it difficult to escape from the eyes of the public. Tracing the idea of administrative system of Kautilya’s “*Arthashastra*” and Mahatma Gandhiji’s “*Su-raj*”, concept of ‘management’ and ‘good governance’ gained momentum. Kautilya in his treatise “*Arthashastra*” elaborated the traits of the king of a well-governed State as:

“In the happiness of his subjects lies his happiness, in their welfare his welfare, whatever pleases himself, he does not consider as good, but whatever pleases his subjects he considers as good”.

The Charter concept is a mere reflection of the idea that the Citizen should be regarded as a “King”. The various Government organizations/departments exist to serve rather than rule its citizen’s. Citizen’s Charters are merely reflections of this principle. CC ensures the realisation of the fact that the service providers and service users should realize that public agencies are meant to provide qualitative public services for which they are paying to the government in the form of direct/indirect taxes. This requires from each organization to spell out the services, the time framework for the services to be delivered and the prescribed standards/norms for the services delivered.

The response to the various challenges faced by the citizen’s in the present times lies in good governance. "Wherever change is for the better, wherever the human condition is improving, people point to good governance as the key. This better governance is not just national - it is local, regional..."
and it is global. Few things are more sensitive - and more challenging - than improving governance." (James Gustave Speth, UNDP). Good governance makes accountability, transparency, participation and rule of law mandatory in context to administrative functions and are vital pre-requisites for sustainable urban development.

Good governance has the following eight attributes such as Accountable, Transparent, Responsive, Equitable and Inclusive, Effective and Efficient, Follows the Rule of Law, Participatory and Consensus oriented which link it to its citizens.

These attributes are shown in (Fig 2.1) as follows:

Fig 2.1
Good Governance

With the concept of “Good Governance”, the government tends to improve its working style and induce the attributes of transparency, responsiveness, and people’s participation in the decision-making process. This makes the administration more accountable to the people whom it serves and takes measures to improve the efficiency and degrees of effectiveness in its working and dealing with people in a more compatible manner. In a

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81 UNESCAP Website: www.unescap.org
democratic set-up, citizens hold the central place in good governance. Therefore, good governance and citizen-centric administration are interrelated and can be viewed as the two sides of the same coin. **Fig 2.2** gives an idea of the relation between good governance and citizen’s charter. (*Citizen’s Charter: A handbook, Center for Good Governance, 2008*)

**Fig 2.2**

Relation between Good Governance and Citizen’s Charter

![Diagram showing the relation between Good Governance and Citizen’s Charter](image)

The *Tenth Plan* drew attention to the implementation of good governance in the following terms:

‘Governance relates to the management of all such processes that, in any society, define the environment which permits and enables individuals to raise their capability levels on the one hand, and provide opportunities to realize their potential and enlarge the set of available choices, on the other. These processes, covering the political, social and economic aspects of life impact every level of human enterprise, be it the individual, the household, the village, the region or the nation. It covers the State, civil society and the market, each of which is critical for sustaining human development. The State is responsible for creating a conducive political, legal and
economic environment for building individual capabilities and encouraging private initiative. The market is expected to create opportunities for people. Civil society facilitates the mobilization of public opinion and people’s participation in economic, social and political activities.\textsuperscript{82}

Thus, Citizen-Centric governance involves active participation of citizen’s in the decision-making process and demands transparency in the working of the governmental machinery. As a service provider, it should exhibit a responsive behaviour towards its service users. Hence, the government organisations should work to serve its citizens rather than rule.

Jawaharlal Nehru’s views on Citizen-Centric Administration:

“…Administration is meant to achieve something, and not to exist in some kind of an ivory tower, following certain rules of procedure and, Narcissuslike, looking on itself with complete satisfaction. The test after all is the human beings and their welfare.”\textsuperscript{83}

Taking into consideration the welfare aspect and an attempt to improve the citizen-administration relation, Citizen’s Charter’s initiative is a response to the quest for solving the problems which a citizen encounters, day in and day out, while dealing with the organizations providing public services. The concept of Citizen's Charter enshrines the trust between the service provider and its users (\textit{Center for Good Governance, 2008}).

A Citizen’s Charter is a public statement that provides the entitlements of citizens to a specific service, the basic standards and conditions of the service to be delivered and simultaneously met by the service users, and the remedies available to the users in case of non-compliance of the a basic service standards.

\textsuperscript{82}Tenth Year Plan (2002-2007), Planning Commission, Government of India, New Delhi, Dimensions and Strategies, Governance and Implementation, Chapter 6, Vol 1, December 2002, p 177

\textsuperscript{83}Address delivered at the Inaugural Meeting of the Institute on 29th March, 1954, extracted from Public Administration Vision and Reality by U.C. Agarwal, IIPA.
Citizen’s Charter is one of the means to achieve the goal of Good Governance. It is an effective tool to ensure transparency and accountability. The concept of Citizen's Charter enshrines the trust between the service provider and its users. It aims to continuously improve the quality of public services for the citizen’s in accordance to the needs and wishes of the users.

The basic objective of the Citizen's Charter is to empower the citizen in relation to public service delivery. CC covers the following dimensions;

- **Commitment**
  It is an agreement of the service provider with the service user

- **Information**
  It provides the details about the nature and delivery of services

- **Customer-centered**
  It should be formulated in such a way as to cater to the needs of the people and meet their expectations. Thus,

  *Citizen’s charter is a document representing the systematic effort taken by public agencies/organizations to focus on the commitment made by them towards their citizens/clients in fulfilling their needs.*

The Charters are expected to incorporate the following elements :-

1. Vision and Mission Statements;
2. Details of business transacted by the organisation;
3. Details of clients;
4. Details of services provided to each client group;
5. Details of grievance redressal mechanism and how to access it; and
6. Expectations from the clients.

If CC Programme is implemented vigorously by the various departments (government/non-government), it will succeed in achieving the goal of good governance. Thus, CC is the means and good governance is an end.

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2.2 Citizen’s Charter: An effective tool of accountability

The conventional institutions fail to deliver the Public services effectively. As a result, they are unable to exercise their role in a fair manner and lack accountability towards society. In the words of Barron and Scott, the relation between the Charter, Citizen and Government can be viewed as:

“The category of the citizen in order then to graft it onto the identity of this consumer, who as such is not the bearer of needs, but an economic actor. What this suggests, in turn, is that the consumer's legitimate expectation of quality in the context of contracts for services may in fact be akin to a constitutional right where those services are provided by public sector agencies. The ideological cement which constitutes the link between citizen and consumer is the ideal of freedom and, ultimately, it is in respect of the association of markets with freedom that the concept of citizenship has mutated into a useful technique for the legitimation of the government's strategy with regard to public services.”

The present administrative system demands a positive change. The need of an hour is the strengthening of the democratic institutions to foster the concept of governance. According to Samuel Paul;

“Social accountability is about strengthening the demand side of good governance, to build capacities of the citizens to raise voice and demand for accountable, transparent and pro-people governance. It is also essentially a set of tools and processes for building effective bridges of the public officials and public representatives with citizens, a sense of collective ownership and responsibility. It is a non-conventional process of holding the power-holders accountable and responsive to the people on whose mandate they exercise the power.”

As a non-conventional tool of social accountability, *CC* is regarded as a powerful tool for fostering change, empowering people, promoting good governance and brings transparency, accountability and responsiveness in qualitative service delivery.

### 2.3 Origin of Citizen’s Charter and Principles of Public Services

With an aim to improve the quality of public services for the citizens of the country as a part of continuous process, *CC* was first articulated and implemented as a national programme in the United Kingdom by the Conservative Government of John Major in 1991. The services provided by various organisations were expected to cater to the needs and expectations of the service users. The *CC* programme was re-launched in 1998 by the Labour Government of Tony Blair which rechristened it “Services First”. In India, the process of formulation of Charters in various Government organisations/departments started in 1996.

The basic objective of the Citizen’s Charter is to empower the citizen in relation to public service delivery. The *six principles*\(^8^7\) of the Citizen’s Charter movement as originally framed were (Fig 2.3)

(i) **Quality**: Improving the quality of services;

(ii) **Choice**: Wherever possible;

(iii) **Standards**: Specifying what to expect and how to act if standards are not met;

(iv) **Value**: For the taxpayers’ money;

(v) **Accountability**: Individuals and Organisations; and

(vi) **Transparency**: Rules/Procedures/Schemes/Grievances.

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\(^8^7\)Citizen’s Charters- A Handbook: A Publication of the Government of India Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances, New Delhi, India
Later these principles were elaborated by the Labour Government as the nine principles of Service Delivery (*1998*)\(^{88}\), which are as follows:

i. Set standards of service;

ii. Be open and provide full information;

iii. Consult and involve;

iv. Encourage access and the promotion of choice;

v. Treat all fairly;

vi. Put things right when they go wrong;

vii. Use resources effectively;

viii. Innovate and improve

ix. Work with other providers.

2.4 The International Scenario

Initiated by John Major in *1991 (UK)*, the concept of CC has influenced many countries to take such steps and implemented similar programmes towards Good Governance (*Table 2.1*)

\(^{88}\) ibid
Table 2.1
Similiar Programmes introduced in different Countries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.No</th>
<th>Place</th>
<th>Programme</th>
<th>Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>Public Service Users’ Charter</td>
<td>1992</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>The Quality Observatory</td>
<td>1992</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>France</td>
<td>Service Charter</td>
<td>1992</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Portugal</td>
<td>The Quality Charter in Public Services</td>
<td>1993</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Malaysia</td>
<td>Client Charter</td>
<td>1993</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Jamaica</td>
<td>Citizen’s Charter</td>
<td>1994</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>Service Standards Initiative</td>
<td>1995</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Paris</td>
<td>Service Quality Initiatives</td>
<td>1996</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>Service Charter</td>
<td>1997</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>India</td>
<td>Citizen’s Charter</td>
<td>1997</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Some initiatives are based on the *UK* model, whereas other initiatives have broken new ground by focussing on the service quality paradigm of the ‘*Total Quality Management*’ (*TQM*) movement. Some more initiatives are pitched between *UK* model and *TQM* movement. In *UK*, *CC* have acquired qualitative standard in the public service delivery in reference to the Next Steps / Modernising Government Initiatives. The quality tools adopted for improving public services include the Business Excellence Model, Investors in People, Charter Mark, *ISO 9000* and Best Value (*Government of UK, 1999*).

On successful implementation of the citizen’s charter programme was expected to have the following features:

- Improved service delivery
- Greater responsiveness of officials towards the public
- Greater public satisfaction with the services offered.
Hence, CC is an attempt to restore the trust and confidence of the service users which is the need of the hour.

The Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat started a Service Standard Initiative in 1995 which was based on the Citizen’s Charters of the United Kingdom. The Service Standard Initiative in Canada was started against the backdrop of citizen expectations relating to friendly, respectful and courteous service; faster response times; extended hours at government offices; and “one-stop-shopping”. At the same time there was a need to reduce the deficit and provide value for money through more efficient use of resources. (Treasury Board of Canada, 1995) Both CC and TQM initiative focus to make public services citizen-centric and meet their standards of their expectations.

2.5 The Indian Scenario

To progressively lead towards the socio-economic development path, the administration in India has been taking steps and introducing various reforms over the years. The introduction of CC has been marked by various positive changes. With the significant progress made in the field of economic development and increased literacy rate has resulted in creating awareness about their rights among the citizens. Citizens demand administration to be more eloquent and expect the anticipative and responsive behaviour from administration as well as respond to their needs.

The Citizen’s Charter programme in India has been a welcome step to provide the basic information to the public and to initiate the prospects of transparency and accountability in the administrative system. These charters were expected to exhibit the desired service standards as per the needs of the service users with time-bound delivery of public services.

In India, the Consumer Coordination Council (CCC) was established in March 1993 with the objective to achieve Good Governance. Accordingly CCC had launched a National Campaign on Citizens’ Charter in July 1996 for implementing the principles of Transparency, Accountability, Standards of
Service, Availability of Information and an Effective Grievance Redressal System in Public Service and still continuous progressively in this direction. CCC and the Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances and Pensions in Government of India (DARP) initiated the task of coordinating, formulating and operationalising citizen’s charters. CCC has been involved in the drawing up of appropriate Citizen’s Charters for various organizations. It is also responsible for evaluation of their implementation in the Health, Telecom, Railways and Insurance & Banking Sectors.

To achieve this, the Government agencies at the Centre and State levels were devised to constitute a task force with representation from users, senior management and the cutting-edge staff.

Since 1996, influenced by the concept of CCC, a consensus began to evolve in the Government on effective and responsive administration. At a conference of chief ministers of state presided over by Prime Minister of India, ‘Action Plan for effective and responsive government’ at the centre and state levels was adopted on 24th May, 1997 in New Delhi.

A comprehensive website of Citizens’ Charters in Government of India (www.goicharters.nic.in) has been developed and was launched by the Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances on 31 May, 2002. This contains the Citizen’s Charters issued by various Central Government Ministries/ Departments/ Organisations.

As on December 2013, nearly 96 Charters had been formulated by the Central Government Ministries/Departments/Organisations (Annexure 3). Around 729 Citizen’s Charters Formulated by 24 State Governments/ Union Territories as on 24th January 2011. Most of the national Charters are posted on the websites of various government organisations/departments and are open to public scrutiny. The organisations with Citizen’s Charters have been advised to give publicity to their Charters through such means as print/electronic media and awareness campaigns. Delhi Government too has brought out 75 such
citizens charters for the benefit of its citizens. These charters are available with the concerned departments and can be obtained free of cost. *Charters can take many different forms, but most of them display at least some of the characteristics of ‘soft’ contracts, breaches of which may give rise to financial or other penalties, but seldom have legal consequences.* (Drewry, 2005)

The Citizen’s Charter represented a landmark shift in the delivery of public services in our country and inclined towards the interests and perspective of service users given greater significance. The impetus of the Citizen’s Charter initiative was focus on the needs of the citizen’s in the delivery of public services and come up with meeting their expectations. Thus, this marks the evolution of the Citizen’s Charter programme and its long-term impact on the citizen-administration relationship.

The evaluation carried out by Indian Institute of Public Administration in 2008 concluded that:

... *the Citizen’s Charter programme of most organizations suffers from poverty of participation and failure of communication, is marked by poor, undefined, ambiguous standards and commitments, carries low visibility and negligible presence not only in public domain but also within the organisation, possesses inadequate mechanism for fulfillment of commitments, however insignificant, lacks a strategy and resource support for its realisation, is shorn of the instruments of measurement, review and evaluation of implementation and outcomes, and has no strategy towards distinguishing the performers from nonperformers.*

Though formulated in 1996 and adopted in 1997 by the Government of India, CC has been reviewed from time to time:

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The Scheme of Citizens’ Charters has been reviewed several times and these have lead to the finalization of Quality Management System Standard – IS 15700: 2005 and also the new assessment-improvement model ‘Sevottam’.90

2.6 Sevottam: Service Delivery Excellence Mode

Background and Purpose

Inspired by the Charter Mark of United Kingdom and the Malcolm model of USA, the basic framework of Sevottam was created by the Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances, Government of India in 2005. It aims in bringing continual improvements in service delivery by government organizations till the achievement of excellence. Adoption of Sevottam model has redefined the role of citizen and service users as stakeholders replacing customers through institutionalization of the tenets of citizen centric governance. Sevottam model of service delivery standards is based on experiments in e-governance. The Sevottam framework has a total of 3 modules with 3 criteria and 11 elements in each. The first module is the Citizen’s Charter that specifies the standards for service delivery, the second is the Grievance Redress Mechanism to get redress if service is not provided as per standards, and the third is the Capability Building for building the capability and capacity of the organization to deliver its services as per standards included in its Charter. With 3 criteria and 11 elements in each Module, the QMS Sevottam has a total of 9 criteria and 33 elements that comprehensively cover all aspects of service delivery to monitor gaps and progressive improvement.91 Citizens / Client’s Charter and Grievance Redress Mechanism were chosen as mandatory indicators for Sevottam.

Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) on request from DARPG created a standard to particularly address the concerns of service delivery by government

91SEVOTTAM – A CONTINUING JOURNEY, 8th May, 2014, p 1
organizations. As a result, an Indian Standard **15700:2005** was created for certifying organizations as a benchmark for quality service delivery and was covered under the scheme of Quality Management System “**Sevottam**”. Broadly based on the **ISO 9000** standard series, the **IS 15700:2005** has additional citizen centric features such as of the Citizen’s / Client’s Charter, Grievance Redress Mechanism, and nomination of an Ombudsman etc.⁹²

The **12th Report** entitled ‘**Citizen Centric Administration – The Heart of Governance**’ of Second Administrative Reforms Commission strongly favoured the Sevottam framework.

Though the concept of **CC** has been adopted in India since **1997**, to plug the various lacunae in the implementation of **CC**, a **certification scheme called Sevottam was launched to address some of the shortcomings of the citizen’s charter**. It provides for the award of the Sevottam symbol of excellence to public service organizations/departments that implements and complies a set of management system requirements. It offers a systematic way to identify weaknesses in specific areas and correct them through systemic changes and process re-engineering. With the adoption of Sevottam scheme, India earned the pride of becoming the first country in the world to publish a requirement standard for quality management of public service delivery. Citizen’s charter is a major compliance criterion for being considered for Sevottam (**Table 2.2**)

**Table 2.2**

**Compliance Criteria**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Compliance Criteria</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Published an approved Citizens’ Charter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Circulated the Charter among service delivery units</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Appointed a senior officer as Director of Public Grievances / Nodal officer for Citizens’ Charter for the Department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Set up a task force for formulation, implementation and review of Citizens’ Charter as per standards &amp; for conducting self-assessment with involvement of representative citizen groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Published grievance lodging and redress procedure, and timelines for redress</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

⁹² ibid
Obtaining a Sevottam symbol of excellence requires the following:

- Successful implementation of Citizen’s Charters
- Service Delivery Preparedness and achievement of Results
- Sound Public Grievance Redress Mechanism.

Thus, the concept of Sevottam has been put forth by the Prime Minister approved the outline of a “Performance Monitoring and Evaluation System (PMES) for Government Departments” \(^93\) Under PMES, each department is required to prepare a Results-Framework Document (RFD). It provides for the award of the Sevottam symbol of excellence to public service organizations that implements and complies a set of management system requirements. It offers a systematic approach to identify weaknesses in specific areas and correct them through systemic changes and reevaluate the process for providing qualitative services. With the adoption of Sevottam scheme, India earned the pride of becoming the first country in the world to publish a required standard for quality management of public service delivery. Citizen’s charter is a major compliance criterion for being considered for Sevottam.

Obtaining a Sevottam symbol of excellence requires the following: (Fig 2.4)

- Successful implementation of Citizen’s Charters
- Service Delivery Preparedness and achievement of Results
- Sound Public Grievance Redress Mechanism.

**Fig 2.4 Intended Outcomes of Implementing Sevottam**

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A RFD provides a summary of the most important results that a department/ministry expects to achieve during the financial year. It is a model developed by the Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances for benchmarking Excellence in Public Service Delivery. The model provides the frame work to organizations to assess and improve the quality of service delivery for the citizens. Using innovative methods and IT for developing business process, following features are also included:

- Identification of the services delivered to the citizens
- Quality of service
- Objectives
- Improvement of quality

The High Power Committee (HPC) on Government Performance chaired by the Cabinet Secretary decided that all RFDs for 2010-2011 will include the following mandatory success indicators: (Table 2.3)

### Table 2.3
**Mandatory Success Indicators**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mandatory Success Indicators</th>
<th>Unit</th>
<th>Weight</th>
<th>Target / Criteria Value</th>
<th>Excellent</th>
<th>Very Good</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Fair</th>
<th>Poor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Independent Audit of Implementation of Citizen’s Charter</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>80</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent Audit of implementation of Public Grievance Redress System</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>80</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

The purpose of the Guidelines (Table 2.3) is to provide guidance to Ministries/Departments to design and implement Citizen’s Charter and Grievance Redress Mechanisms for Sevottam compliance.
Concept of Sevottum

Sevottum comes from the Hindi words "Seva" and "Uttam". It means excellence in service delivery. It is a citizen-centric administrative measure to improve the quality of public services India. The need for a tool like Sevottam arose from the fact that Citizens’ Charters by themselves could not achieve the desired results in improving quality of public services.94

Sevottum includes the following three main components:

1. **Citizen Charter and Service Standards**
   Citizen Charter is the document where a public sector Organization declares its key services along with delivery timelines and requirements. Sevottam focuses on the formulation, monitoring and review of Citizen Charter to ensure the organization promises what it can deliver and delivers what it has promised.

2. **Public Grievances**
   In this context, Sevottam focuses on receipt, redressal and prevention of grievances.

3. **Service Delivery Enablers**
   This includes the key pillars which are required to give excellent service and includes Customer Feedback, Employee Motivation and infrastructure.

   Assessment of Sevottam in compliance to Citizen’s Charter acts as a screening mechanism to filter out organizations that do not meet the basic requirements to even enter the assessment process. Currently it consists of 5 criteria that ascertain whether the organization has started applying some tools that can improve service delivery and is therefore likely to benefit from the assessment process. The criteria are articulated in the form of questions that offer binary choices (“Yes/No”). We go to the next level of assessment only after all questions in the first level have been answered in the affirmative95: (Table 2.4)

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94ARC – Citizen- Centric Administration (Good Governance), upscTree, 24th November, 2015
95Guidelines for Designing and Implementing SEVOTTAM Compliant Citizen’s / Client’s Charters and Public Grievance Redress Mechanisms by Central Ministries/ Departments, Chapter 7: Ensuring Sevottum Compliance, p 34
Sevottam targets stated the following needs such as:

- **Timeliness**: time norms for specific services are enumerated in Citizens’ Charter
- The services and norms are set as per *active discussions* with different *stakeholders*
- **Effectiveness**: a single window system for service deliverables is targeted for delivery to cut down on assessees shuttling from one desk to another to get services
- **Responsiveness**: a robust grievance redress system is needed to listen to assessees grievance as well as redress them timely
- **Courteous behaviour**: norm for behaviour, specially in assessees facing positions, is described in the Citizens’ Charter and pro-active feedback on service delivery is gathered to judge this
- **Information**: facilitation centers and help centers are targeted to meet assessees’ needs of information.
- **Empathy**: public grievance officers are needed to listen to assessees in their time of need

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 2.4</th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>i.</strong> Has the department published an approved Citizen’s Charter?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>ii.</strong> Has the department circulated the Charter among service delivery units?</td>
<td></td>
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<td><strong>iv.</strong> Has the department set up a task force for formulation, implementation and review of Citizen’s Charter as per standards &amp; for conducting self-assessment with involvement of representative citizen groups?</td>
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<td><strong>v.</strong> Has the department published grievance lodging and redress procedure, and timelines for redress?</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Thus, Sevottam is an excellent executive tool to ensure compliance of CC on the ground.

2.7 Citizen’s Charter Bill, 2011

The Citizens Charter Bill, 2011 (also known as Citizen's Charter and Grievance Redressal Bill, 2011 or The Right of Citizens for Time Bound Delivery of Goods and Services and Redressal of their Grievances Bill, 2011) was presented by Minister of State for Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions, V. Narayanasamy in Lok Sabha in December 2011. The Bill seeks to confer on every citizen the right to time-bound delivery of specified goods and services and to provide a mechanism for Grievance Redressal. The Bill makes it mandatory for every public authority to publish a Citizen's Charter within six months of the commencement of the Act, failing which the official concerned would face action, including a fine of up to Rs. 50,000 from his salary and disciplinary proceedings.

The citizen's charter published by public authority or government department should clearly mention all the services rendered by the department along with timelines. The bill also provides for a "grievance redressal mechanism for non-compliance of citizen's charter." Due to dissolution of the 15th Lok Sabha, the bill had lapsed.

2.8 Right to Service Act (2011)

The Right to Service Act, 2011 has empowered the citizen’s with the right to hassle free, corruption free and time bound service delivery mechanism in most of the Public Organisations/ Departments. The main aim of the Right to Service Act is the easy access to the time bound delivery of Public services.

“Almost 41% of the Charters under consideration did not indicate any timeframe for redress of public grievances. 61% of them did not indicate any timeframe for acknowledging...”

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96Citizens Charter Bill tabled in Lok Sabha”, The Hindu, 20th December 2011
97Citizen's Charter and Grievance Redressal Bill: What it offers”, NDTV, 20th December 2011
98ibid
the receipt of public grievances and nearly 43% of them did not have the timeframe for responding to the petitioners. None of the Charters reviewed specified whether a petitioner would be conveyed the reasons for rejection of his grievances.

This Act is an attempt to support the proper implementation of the Citizen’s Charter Programme and improves the credibility of the Public Organisations/ Departments. This act ensures in speeding up the working scheme of the various organisations and enhances transparency, accountability and credibility. This Act can be regarded as one step ahead to Right to Information Act, 2005 and a strong weapon to eliminate the corruption from the Public organisations/ bring transparency in the official working and to enhance accountability of the Public Servant. The Right to Service Act, 2011 has empowered service users/citizens to have an easy access to hassle free, corruption free and time bound service delivery mechanism in the public organisations/departments. This Act serves as a strong weapon to protect the rights of the citizens. Table 2.5 gives the list of the states that have implemented the Right to Service Act.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Act Title</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Punjab</td>
<td>Right to Public Service Act, 2011</td>
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<tr>
<td>Uttarakhand</td>
<td>The Uttarakhand Right to Public Service Act, 2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madhya Pradesh</td>
<td>Madhya Pradesh Lok Sewaon Ke Pradan Ki Guarantee Adhiniyam, 2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bihar</td>
<td>Bihar Right to Public Services Act, 2011</td>
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<tr>
<td>Delhi</td>
<td>Delhi (Right of Citizen to Time Bound Delivery of Services) Act, 2011</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jharkhand</td>
<td>Right to Service Act, 2011</td>
</tr>
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<td>Himachal Pradesh</td>
<td>Himachal Pradesh Public Services Guarantee Act, 2011</td>
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<td>State</td>
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<td>Rajasthan</td>
<td>Rajasthan Public Service Guarantee Act, 2011</td>
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<td>Uttar Pradesh</td>
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<td>Kerala</td>
<td>The Kerala State Right to Service Act, 2012</td>
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<tr>
<td>Karnataka</td>
<td>The Karnataka (Right Of Citizens to Time Bound Delivery Of Services) Bill, 2011</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chattisgarh</td>
<td>Chhattisgarh Lok Seva Guarantee Bill, 2011</td>
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<td>Oddissa</td>
<td>Odisha Right to Public Services Act, 2012</td>
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<td>Assam</td>
<td>Assam Right to Public Services Act, 2012</td>
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<td>Central Government</td>
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<td>West Bengal</td>
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<tr>
<td>Goa</td>
<td>The Goa (Right to Time-Bound Delivery of Public Services) Act, 2013</td>
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<tr>
<td>Haryana</td>
<td>The Haryana Right to Service Act, 2014</td>
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<tr>
<td>Maharashtra</td>
<td>Maharashtra Right to Public Services Ordinance, 2015</td>
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As accepted by the Government of India, 12th Report of the Second Administrative Reforms Commission has recommended introducing hessel-free delivery of public services. Since June 2009, the Department of Administrative Reforms & Public Grievances (DARPG) has been trying to make efforts to review and revise the document of Citizen’s Charters at both the levels of government (i.e Centre and the State/Union Territories). Also, the Parliamentary Standing Committee has also come up with a similar recommendation. Since then 19 states have enacted the Right to Services Act, to promote Right of Citizen’s for effective Time Bound Delivery of Public Goods & Services including Redressal of their Grievances. It makes a provision of statutory laws which act as a supporting device to guarantee time bound delivery of Public services rendered by the Public Organisations to citizens. It also makes an attempt to punishing the errant Public officials who
fail to provide the respective service stipulated under the statutory law. **Right to Service legislation are meant to reduce corruption among the government officials and to increase transparency and public accountability.**

Madhya Pradesh became the first state in India to enact Right to Service Act on **18 August 2010** and Bihar was the second to enact this bill on **25 July 2011**.

Based on various factors such as expected standards for the various services, quality of the services provided and the time limit, service providers enable the service users to avail the public services of the government departments with minimum inconvenience and maximum speed. This demands clear, simple, precise and enforceable statements of people’s entitlements to public services in the form of Public Service Guarantees. **The guarantees should specify the minimum standard of service provision that service users can expect, and set out the arrangements for redress that apply should service providers fail to meet the standard promised.”** These are expected to indicate ‘WHERE TO GO’ and ‘HOW TO PROCEED’.

Also, the service providers are aware of their duties and responsibilities to attend to the problems of the concerned people as service users within the required time-frame as mentioned by them. The dissemination of information about the Right To Service Act creates awareness, responsiveness and accountability among the citizen’s. In India, Right to Service Act comprises of statutory laws which guarantee time-bound delivery of various public services rendered to citizens. It also provides mechanism for punishing the errant public servant if they lack the capability of providing the stipulated services. Hence, Right to Service legislation ensures delivery of time bound services to the public. If the concerned officer fails to provide the service in time, he will have to pay a fine. Thus, it is one step to reduce corruption among the government officials and to enhance transparency and public accountability.

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99 Corrupt watchdog hails Bihar, BIHAR govs as best service-providers”, Times of India. 21st April 2011
100 Right to Service Act to come into force from tomorrow”, Hindustan Times, 14th August 2011
Right to Services (RTS)-related initiatives all over the country is mainly in response to the populous anger against corruption. This ensures smooth delivery of Public Services to the people and crack down on erring officials.

2.9 Objectives of Citizen’s Charter

The significant objectives of the Citizen’s Charter of any organization offering Public Services are summarized as given below:

1. To ensure Citizen-centric approach in all its processes and dealings exhibiting qualitative and time bound services
2. To improvement of products and services delivered.
3. Ensuring effective Two-way Communication Channel for citizens involving their active participation in the decision-making process.
4. Demonstrating Transparency and Openness of its business operations by hosting the Citizen’s Charter on their respective web sites.
5. Working towards customer satisfaction by inclusion of various like inputs like time-bound services, Grievance Redressal mechanisms, Handling Complaints etc.

Primarily adapted from the UK model, the Citizen’s Charter in India has an additional component of ‘expectations from the clients’ or in other words ‘obligations of the users’. To ensure the Citizen’s Charter in compliance with the needs of the service users requires active participation of consumer organisations, citizen, and other stakeholders in the formulation of the Citizen’s Charter. Internal and external monitoring, review, updates and evaluation of CC should be done from time to time to ensure its successful implementation.

2.10 Benefits of Charter Programme

- It ensures accountability and transparency in the working of the government machinery
- Promotes democratic values
- Empowerment of citizens
● Improve the efficiency and effectiveness of organisations
● It make administration responsive towards citizen’s needs
● Supports effective and judicious use and management of the available resources
● For sustainable development of the country
● It ensures proper implementation of laws, policies and programmes of government
● Proper delivery of public services
● Public welfare
● It strengthen the bond between citizens and administration
● Time management
● It improve the socio-economic status of the country
● It makes redressal of grievances more effective
● It puts a check on Corruption
● Involves active participation of people in the decision-making process
● It enhances the satisfaction of the citizen’s w.r.t time bound delivery of Public Services by the administration thereby improving the quality of life of the common man
● Reduce the traditional drawbacks of administration such as red tapism, Nepotism, corruption etc
● As a supporting device for achieving the objectives of Good Governance
● If implemented properly, a common man will not have to depend on the mercy of the bureaucracy
● As a supporting device for achieving the objectives of Good Governance
● As a Performance indicator to track service delivery performance.
● As a supporting device for achieving the objectives of Good Governance
● As a management tool to reduce corruption
The charter demonstrates the ability of service providers to consistently provide quality products and services efficiently in a responsive manner that meets requirements of the service users.

**Appraisal**

A large population depends upon most of the services rendered by different Organisations (Government/Non-Government). *Citizen’s Charter* has been considered as a major compliance criterion for *Sevottam*. It also serves as a significant module for assessing the quality, efficiency and effectiveness of Public Services. *Public grievance redress* and *service delivery system* are also central to the *Citizen’s Charter itself*. Right to Service Act has been introduced by central and many state governments to support the proper implementation of the Citizen’s Charter Programme and improves the credibility of the Public Organisations/Departments among the *CC* has a bearing on the overall state of public administration. A sincere effort should be made to create awareness among the service users. *CC* should also be reviewed and updated from time to time to meet the upcoming challenges in regards of its bearing on the state of governance. To achieve the goals of Good Governance, *CC* is a response to the quest for solving problems of governance which citizens as service users encounters while dealing with the Public officials. The concept of *CC* is a positive initiative and a welcome step with the objective to enhance the trust between service providers and service users and strengthen their relationship. As a tool of social accountability, *CC* also makes an attempt to empower the citizen in relation to public service delivery. The *CC* has been developed as a tool to improve the quality of services, address the needs of citizen’s rights and set clear and precise standards of performance.

As truly said, “*Miracles don’t happen suddenly*”, similarly the changes/modifications cannot be made easily and quickly in the traditional working of the administrative system. This requires not only introducing various reforms in the government machinery from time to time but also a careful, well-planned design and proper implementation of the Charter Programme. The extent to
which CC Programme can be made effective by considering numerous factors which form an integrated part of the whole system. This includes the prioritisation of citizens needs and meeting their expectations, superior senior-subordinate relationship and a well-functioning grievance redress mechanism. Keeping in view the basic thrust of CC to make disposal of public services citizen centric, its success can be ensured that these services are demand driven rather than supply driven. The realisation of the importance of Citizen’s charter and its impact on the citizen-administration relationship can pave the way to good governance, if implemented properly. Thus, Citizen’s Charter is not an end in itself but is a means to an end.