



Research Article

Citizen Charter and its Implementation in the state of Jammu and Kashmir: A case study of Revenue Department

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Received: 03 August 2016, Accepted: 17 September 2016, Available online : 01 October 2016, **Vol.1, No.1(October 2016)**

Abstract

This paper presents an empirical study of effectiveness and implementation of Citizen's Charter in the state of Jammu and Kashmir in the ambit of Public Services Guarantee Act, 2011. This research paper is based on primary and secondary data, primary data has been collected with the help of self designed questionnaire based on Likert's five point scale. The study concluded with the fact that the employees of the Revenue Department J&K do not have even knowledge of different standard operating procedures (SOPs) for the delivery of services to the public. Further, there is a lack of awareness among the public in connection with the time framework under which services are to be rendered by the public officials. It is the main concern for all the government around the world to deliver services to the citizen. And, in India this challenge is very big because of its vastness, diversity and population. Citizen Charter provides the basic duties and commitment of any organization (Government) towards its citizen. But there are lots of issues that affect successful implementation of Citizen Charter; this paper is all about the problems and solutions of the same.

Keywords: SOP, citizen, service delivery, charter

1. Introduction

The concept of Citizen's Charter enshrines the trust between the service provider and its users. The concept was first articulated and implemented in the United Kingdom by the Conservative Government of John Major in 1991 as a National Programme with a simple aim: to continuously improve the quality of public services for the people of the country so that these services respond to the needs and wishes of the users. The programme was re-launched in 1998 by the Labour Government of Tony Blair which rechristened it "Service First".

The basic objective of the Citizen's Charter is to empower the citizen in relation to public service delivery. The six principles of the Citizen's Charter movement as originally framed were:

- I. Quality: Improving the quality of services;
- II. Choice: Providing choice wherever possible;
- III. Standards: Specify what to expect and how to act if standards are not met;
- IV. Value: Add value for the taxpayers' money;
- V. Accountability: Be accountable to individuals and organisations; and

VI. Transparency: Ensure transparency in Rules/Procedures/Schemes/Grievances.

Over the years, in India, significant progress has been made in the field of economic development. This, along with a substantial increase in the literacy rate, (from 51.63% to 65.38% in the last decade) has made Indian citizens increasingly aware of their rights. Citizens have become more articulate and expect the administration not merely to respond to their demands but also to anticipate them. It was in this climate that since 1996 a consensus had evolved in the Government on effective and responsive administration. In a Conference of Chief Ministers of various States and Union Territories held on 24 May, 1997 in New Delhi, presided over by the Prime Minister of India, an "Action Plan for Effective and Responsive Government" at the Centre and State levels was adopted. One of the major decisions at that Conference was that the Central and State Governments would formulate Citizen's Charters, starting with those sectors that have a large public interface (e.g., Railways, Telecom, Posts and Public Distribution Systems).

These Charters were required to include standards of service and time limits that the public can reasonably expect avenues of grievance redress and a provision for independent scrutiny with the involvement of citizen and consumer groups. Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances in Government of India (DARPG) initiated the task of coordinating, formulating and operationalizing Citizen's Charters. Guidelines for formulating the Charters as well as a list of do's and don'ts were communicated to various government departments/organisations to enable them to bring out focused and effective charters. For the formulation of the Charters, the government agencies at the Centre and State levels were advised to constitute a task force with representation from users, senior management and the cutting edge staff.

The Charters are expected to incorporate the following elements :- (i) Vision and Mission Statement; (ii) Details of business transacted by the organisation; (iii) Details of clients; (iv) Details of services provided to each client group; (v) Details of grievance redress mechanism and how to access it; and (vi) Expectations from the clients. Primarily an adaptation of the UK model, the Indian Citizen's Charter has an additional component of 'expectations from the clients' or in other words 'obligations of the users'. Involvement of consumer organisations, citizen groups, and other stakeholders in the formulation of the Citizen's Charter is emphasised to ensure that the Citizen's Charter meets the needs of the users. Regular monitoring, review and evaluation of the Charters, both internally and through external agencies, are enjoined. As on March, 2005, 107 Citizen's Charters had been formulated by the Central Government Ministries/Departments/Organisations and 629 Charters by various agencies of State Governments & Administrations of Union Territories. Most of the national Charters are posted on the government's websites and are open to public scrutiny. The organisations with Citizen's Charters are advised to give publicity to their Charters through such means as print/electronic media and awareness campaigns. The main purpose of this study is get awareness whether the citizen charter is followed in the revenue office of the J&K administration or not. That is why a self structured questionnaire is developed in order to enumerate the role and importance of the citizen charter.

2. Objectives of the study

- 1) To study about the citizen charter and its importance in civil administration.
- 2) To determine the awareness level among the civic society about the Citizen Charter.
- 3) To discuss the role of citizen charter in prompt service delivery.

- 4) To suggest the measures for its effective implementation.

3. Literature Review

Right to public services is:

- 1) Subject to provisions of the Act, every eligible person in the State shall have a right to public services.
 - (2) The right referred to in sub-section (1) shall include the right etc- (a) have access to the public service; (b) receive public service within the specified time limit; (c) receive public service in a transparent manner; (d) demand performance of duties and functions in accordance with the Act; (e) hold the concerned designated officer accountable for any service deficiency; and (f) seek compensation with respect to non-providing of service or deficiency in service.
4. Notification of public services and time limit. The Government may, from time to time, specify the services to be the public services for purposes of the Act and shall specify the time limit within which such services shall be provided to the eligible persons. (2) For providing services specified under sub-section (1), the Government may for different areas and for different services designate officers who shall be responsible for providing each of such services to the eligible persons. Public administration is government in action to accomplish public well being. To be relevant the discipline needs to be sensitive to the burning issue of social change and socio-economic development. The citizen's perceptions about the working of the system form a vital part of our understanding of public administration. It is a kind of training for citizenship, where the citizens need to be taught to differentiate between how the public administration system of the country is structured and how it operates in practice. The independent subject of public administration is worth promoting not simply as a matter of academic interest but because of the contribution it can make to the welfare of society". With increase in the aspirations of the citizens, the administration specially in developing societies are responsible for regulatory activities like infrastructure development and welfare activates ranging from building of roads, railways, management of resources, (land, water, forests) provision of food, housing, traffic, control prices of drugs, environment, social welfare legislations. The current trend towards globalization has led to the growing importance of Non-state actors in administration and increasing global interdependence leading to more and more democratization and people's participation. Public administration has to respond to the demands of new groups that look to government for protection and development. Tribal development, child labour, gender equity, human rights are some of the issues which public administration cannot afford to ignore today. Administration cannot remain static in such a dynamic world situation. Today citizens are aggressively vigilant demanding transparency in all administrative transactions. Corruption in administration in recent years, has taken a heavy toll of both efficiency and

national morality. Ethical behaviour is what is expected of public administration more and more in the coming years. There is a resurgence of the people actor syndrome today to assert real popular control over government through decentralization, openness, transparency and accountability.

Citizen's Charter is a means to ascertain this accountability in administration. Public service for many years has been blamed for poor service delivery which some scholars like Osborne and Plastnik; (1997) refer to ineffective, insensitive and inefficient and often hostile to the very people they are supposed to serve. Many countries world over have tried to come up with new ways of delivering services to citizens effectively and efficiently by shifting the focus from the service providers to service receivers. One of the tools which has yielded positive results in this shift is the citizen charter. A citizen charter can be defined as a written statement prepared by a public institution which outlines the nature, quality and quantity of service that citizens should expect from the institution. It should outline; what the institution does, the standards of the services to be provided, what service users can expect, the responsibilities of the service users and how users may seek redress if they are dissatisfied with the services or in the event the institution does not live up to the commitments in the charter (Ministry of Health-Kenya 2010).

Reasons assigned for the introduction of citizen's charter are: - (a) the onset of globalization led to opening up of economy leading to growing importance of Trans National Corporations. (b) The domestic administration because of tough competition with its foreign counterparts, especially in sectors like banking, insurance, housing, was compelled to upgrade and develop itself. (c) People's belief in government and bureaucracy was eroded because the World Bank sponsored governance campaign altered the conventional approach to public administration by providing a critique of public bureaucracy. Bureaucrats have been defined as rent seekers charging a heavy premium for whatever tasks they are traditionally assigned as propounded by Public Choice Theorists.

The civil service must change its present attitude of aggrandizement, arrogance and aloofness, and become really civil in its dealings with the citizens and service to the society. It must inculcate fanatic integrity in the work and behaviour. In short, it must consciously set out to professionalize and humane itself. 1 (d) the above viewpoint of the General Public regarding the Bureaucracy got a further impetus by scholarly works during early Nineties. Of them special mention should be made of the work Reinventing Government by David Osborne and Ted Gaebler, and works by Tullock, Nikanen, Vincent Ostrom. (e) The citizen today due to rule of law and democracy expects the public servant to be impartial, honest, responsive, fair and competent in the performance of his official duties. Democracy demands that the citizen's voice be heard and taken

note of in the delivery of services by government agencies. Administration has to understand and not avoid citizens, their demands, hopes.

4. Research Methodology

Research Design: Exploratory and Descriptive
 Research tool and instrument: Likert's 5 point scale varying from strongly disagree to strongly agree.

Research Technique: Mean and Standard Deviation

Sampling Frame

Sampling Technique: Simple Random Sampling

Sampling Unit: Common People

Table 1: Data Analysis and Interpretation

S. No	Questions/Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation
1	Information	2.9	1.04
2	Adherence to charter	1.9	0.59
3	Certificate issuance	1.2	0.50
4	Agents and Touts	4.3	0.49
5	Political corruption and nepotism	4.5	0.50
6	Redtapism	4.3	0.46
7	E governance	4.3	0.47
8	E governance helps in avoiding corruption	4.06	0.58
9	Issuance of PRC requirements are tough	3.5	1.1
10	Awareness of public	1.4	0.56
11	Clerical staff awareness	2.1	0.69
12	Public awareness	4.3	0.79
13	Information for contact	4.6	1.03
14	Charter language	4.1	0.57
15	Effectiveness of citizen charter	2.6	0.85
		3.36	0.69

5. Results and Discussions

This study is intended to explain the perception of the respondents i.e, common people or civic individuals of the society where 30 questionnaires were distributed across the people at Ganderbal district, in which all the 30 forms were filled by the respondents. The results of Table above reveals that **"public awareness about the services delivery is quiet evident from its mean value i.e, 4.6 while as this statement is also** professed to be superior in terms by mean value of Q10 i.e, 1.4 which again disagrees with the statement. Also the time taken by the administration is also high it proves that either there is political corruption or there/ is lack of awareness about the citizen charter but above in the results the people are aware about the citizen charter therefore it approves that there is redtapism in the employees either due to corruption or any other thing.

Additionally, the majority of respondents tended to be negative with respect to issuance of PRC and all other documents in the revenue department and clerical knowledge about the charter.As their mean value falls in between 1.2 to 2.1 which in the scale falls in between the very poor and poor. Towards the **e-governance and language of the charter** the response were

invited which clearly indicated the strongly agree as there is need of the multi language and e-governance in the departments which reduces the corruption and red-tapism.

5.1 Researcher's Conceived Model

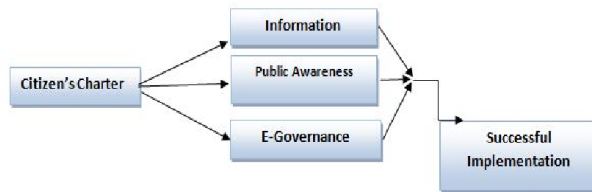


Figure 1: Citizen Charter Implementation.

6. Conclusions

The study concluded with the fact that there is need of awareness programmes to both public as well as public administrators as the data analysis indicates that 45 % people are unaware about the citizen charter which includes both people as well as administrators. In addition to this, for the implementation of citizen charter in the administration, it should be printed in many languages including local language. Towards the e-governance, it helps us to avoid corruption up to 80% and will reduce the red-tapism.

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