

Efficacy and Effectiveness of Citizen Charter and Service Delivery Act in Select Central Government Ministries/Department of Government of India and States



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**Efficacy and Effectiveness of Citizen Charter and Service Delivery Act
in Select Central Government Ministries/Department of Government of
India and States**

Submitted to



**Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances
Government of India**

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1. Background

In India, the government has been omnipresent in the lives of its citizens, envisaged by the architects of the nation following its independence from British Colonialism in 1947. With the aim of alleviating endemic poverty, free or heavily subsidised provisions of basic and essential services has been the hallmark of public policy. Citizens in low income democracies depend to a large extent on the state for the provisions of basic services, viz education, health and infrastructure, either due to absence of a market for these services or poverty. Thus, the role of the state-exemplified by its elected representatives and public officials – takes centre stage in the governance and delivery of public services.

There are several pathways through which governance and the quality of public services can impact a country's economic growth. In the absence of a social security program in most developing countries, public provision of low-cost food can help the poor escape the vicious circle of underemployment and poverty. Thus, the effective delivery of public programs is likely to have a direct impact on growth.

Government established the balance between spending the amount judiciously and improving the satisfaction of people. Citizen Charter enforces the accountability of the department as citizens are aware of the service standards and actual performance of the services. Citizen Charters, initially voluntary declarations, outlining service standards and timelines, have evolved into a significant aspect of public service delivery, promoting the creation of legal frameworks like the Public Service Delivery Act in states. This evolution reflects a move from simply outlining expectations to legally mandate accountability and service quality.

2. Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the present study are:

1. To review and prepare a status report on the working of the Citizen's Charter,
2. To study the working and effectiveness of the Service Delivery Act in select states, and
3. To suggest appropriate strategies and improvements to make the Citizen's Charter an effective tool of service delivery to the citizens.

3. Methodology

The study is an empirical research based on both primary and secondary data. The primary data was collected with the help of a set of questionnaires administered to various stakeholders. The secondary data was gathered from reports, various state government offices, and data available through other information sources. The entire study was divided into sequentially arranged functional components like schedule construction, staff recruitment, secondary research, schedule construction, primary data collection, data analysis, and report writing.

This study focused on different service provisions towards the citizen and intended to analyze the people's level of satisfaction with the service provisions after the implementation of the Citizens' Charter in the different M/Ds (ministries/department) of the GoI. Altogether, there are 54 Ministries in GoI comprising 93 Departments and various affiliated organizations. This study considered 14 Ministries for specific feedback and 54 Ministries for a broader overview.

For the evaluation of the Service Delivery Guarantee Act, data was collected from the five states - Himachal Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Assam. While selecting these five states, special care was taken in such a way that they could represent different geographical regions of the country. In this regard, Himachal Pradesh was selected from North, Andhra Pradesh from South, Madhya Pradesh from Central India, Maharashtra from West, and Assam from East on the working and effectiveness of the Service Delivery Act. Structured questionnaires were prepared and pre-tested to collect data from the users of the service.

Data from two sample districts from each selected state was collected through a structured digital questionnaire using the digital platform CAPI. The sample size of 200 respondents collected from each state, 100 respondents from each district, totaling 1000 respondents, constituted the sample size from the five states. The responses and entries were scrutinized and categorized into themes and sub-themes. For data analysis, statistical software like Excel and SPSS was used. The research results have been presented in the form of graphs and tables.

The primary data was collected with the help of a set of questionnaires administered to various stakeholders. Three different sets of questionnaires were prepared for the

collection of stakeholders' responses from Organizations and Departments (MODs) and service users from the sample states.

- Questionnaire for Nodal Officer of the Ministry/ Department
- Questionnaire for Employees of the Ministry/ Department
- Questionnaires for service users under the Public Service Guarantee Act in States

The secondary data was gathered from reports, data furnished by selected Ministries, Departments (M/Ds), and five selected states through structured formats. Data collected from the field were scrutinized and categorized in themes and sub-themes. For data analysis, statistical software like Excel and SPSS was used. The research results have been presented in the form of graphs and tables.

3.1 Sample Size and Design

As the study analysed the current status of the Citizen's Charter and also covered challenges and issues faced by the Department in implementation, the target respondents were Nodal Officers of M/Ds (ministries/department) and responsible employees posted in respective M/Ds of various grades, cadres, and services.

At the state level, the general population as service users were covered under the survey to gather their perceptions and experiences about the services they availed under the Right to Public Service Guarantee Act.

3.2 Sample Distribution

The selection of the sample for this study followed a purposive random sampling method. In the first stage of the sampling process, all the M/Ds at the Central Government level were approached, and responses in the form of a questionnaire were solicited. Then, separate questionnaires were administered to the Nodal Officers and Employees of the selected MODs. For the service users, five states representing each geographical region were taken for the survey. Two districts were selected from each state, one urban populated district and one rural populated district were covered from each state.

4. Limitations of the Study

The study had selected five states as sample states for the collection of data apart from M/Ds (ministries/department) for Citizen Charter responses. However, there were certain limitations experienced during the course of data collection.

1. Himachal Pradesh, as one of the selected states, did not provide the statistical data report in the format sent to them, except information on departments, notified services, as the AR department of Himachal Pradesh is in the process of making the integrated Portal. After integration, all the data will be accessible easily. But presently, no data was provided by the state of Himachal Pradesh.
2. Despite several reminders sent to the M/Ds for filling in the questionnaires/formats sent to them and despite holding personal visits/meetings with each of the ministries for data procurement, only 14 M/Ds responded with filled in questionnaires out of the total of 54 M/Ds (ministries/department) as far as the Citizen's Charter is concerned.

5. Findings

A. Citizen Charter: Response of Organisations and Officials

1. Out of 54 M/Ds, only 14 responded, despite reminders and personal visits. This shows the Citizen's Charter is not a priority. There were no designated Nodal Officers in the M/Ds (ministries/department).
2. All the respondents said ensuring accountability and maintaining a positive image of the organisation, and ensuring better quality of service are the main objectives of the charter.
3. Citizen Charter was formulated after a brainstorming session with stakeholders and employees of the Dept/Ministry.
4. Quick response to a citizen's request for a service was the most important factor for quality enhancement.
5. Eleven M/Ds have issued guidelines for the enforcement of service standards.

6. All fourteen M/Ds have an online portal for availing the services.
7. Timely redressal of grievances is the major commitment to implement the charter.
8. Charter is distributed to all sections and also uploaded on the website.
9. Eight M/Ds (ministries/department) have cited lack of manpower as the main hindrance to implementing the charter.
10. Thirteen M/Ds (ministries/department) said that there was an arrangement for periodic review of the charter, and eight said it was reviewed one year ago. But there was no evidence about it.
11. Only top management of the M/Ds (ministries/department) is involved in reviewing the charter, and the employees are actively involved in the formulation of the charter.
12. All fourteen organisations agreed that the charter has contributed to better role clarity for the employees at various levels and also has an effect on revision and renewed understanding of their roles.
13. The M/Ds (ministries/department) are satisfied with the level of citizens' awareness about the charter, and they think it is capable of fulfilling the needs of the citizens.
14. For feedback from citizens suggestion/ complaint box is the main source, followed by social media platforms.
15. 68% of the respondents (14 in total) said the employees have a copy of the Citizen Charter with them, but it did not appear to be.
16. 58.3% of the employees have attended the orientation programme on Citizen Charter. 58.3% of the employees said that the charter is prepared in consultation with the citizens.

B. Public Service Delivery Act: Perception of Citizen

The study was conducted in five states, namely Assam, Andhra Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, and Maharashtra, with a sample size of 1000 respondents (Users of services)

1. Among the respondents, 52.9% of them in the states of Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Himachal Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, and Maharashtra are aware of the Public Service Delivery Act to a large extent, and 46.5% are aware of the Act to some extent.
2. Digital technology reduces distance and time. 87.9% of the respondents are aware of digital technology to access the services, and 91.5% of them are satisfied with the range of services available at the portal
3. With mobile penetration even in rural areas, people access a variety of services; moreover they also get several government welfare schemes through the mobile App. 73.2% of the respondents are aware of the mobile app to access the service, while 43.6% are aware of the online portal, but 69.8% still prefer the physical service centres to access the service.
4. Awareness about the services available under the Act is equally important to access the services. 41.1% of the respondents are aware to a large extent about the services available under the Act, while 57.8% are aware to some extent.
5. As far as the ease of access to services is concerned, 46% of the respondents said it is very easy, while 42.4% were of the view that it is somewhat easy.
6. It is important that a service is received within the stipulated time frame. 83.8% of the respondents agreed that their request for a service was received within the timeframe.
7. Tracking a service request is very important. 82.3% of the respondents agreed that there is a facility available to track the service request online.
8. Respondents who have accessed service under the Act through the digital portal seem to be satisfied. 26.1% of the respondents are highly satisfied with

the range of services available under the Act, while 30.1% are satisfied to a large extent. The respondents are largely satisfied with the services available.

9. 40.4% of the respondents were of the view that there has been a continuous improvement in the delivery of service since the inception of the Act. 25.3% of the respondents liked the services provided to them to a large extent, while 40.7% liked it to some extent.
10. With the enactment of the Public Service Delivery Act in the five states, 26.1% of the respondents felt there has been a significant positive impact, while 62.3% of them felt that there has been some positive impact of the Act on their day-to-day life.
11. In all five states, the implementation of the Public Service Delivery Act has made the system more accountable, transparent, and reduced corruption to a large extent, opined the respondents.
12. Redressal of grievances is important in any mechanism having a public interface. 65.6% of the respondents are largely satisfied with the available grievance redressal mechanism. 62% of them are also aware of the existence of an appellate authority for appeal.
13. 51.0% of the respondents are aware of the procedure for complaining, while 49.0% are not aware of how to file a complaint. In spite of the awareness about the mechanism to file a complaint, 76.6% of the respondents have never filed a complaint.
14. Among those who have filed the complaint 47% were not satisfied with the service provided, and 47.0% against the delivery of the service beyond the stipulated time frame.
15. There is scope to improve the services. 90.5% of the respondents felt that the government needs to innovate electronically to deliver better services.
16. Educating the citizens about the Public Service Act is equally important to ensure its effective implementation. 56.8% of the respondents have not

attended any awareness programme about the Act. 52.4% of the respondents said that no feedback was taken from them about the services provided.

17. As far as the common problems faced by the respondents in accessing the services are concerned, it mainly relates to technical issues (60.7%), and lack of awareness opined 58.5% of the respondents.

18. The attitude of the officials is very important when citizens approach them for help. 33% of the respondents said the official was helpful to a large extent, and 62.8% thought that they were helpful to some extent. However, a large number of respondents (65.8%) were not aware of the penalty clause in case the services are not provided as per the timeframe.

6. Recommendations

1. To promote citizen-centric governance and also align with the vision of the government, Citizen Charter should be given a priority in all organisations. It should be available at the reception counter of all organisations. Its important provisions should be displayed for the benefit of citizens. Every organisation should have a designated Nodal Officer for the Citizens' Charter. This will promote open government and informed citizens.
2. The Public Service Delivery Act has had a significant impact on improving the quality of service being delivered. The process has become simple, transparent, and it has reduced corruption. However, regular updating and monitoring are required. Standards need to be reviewed periodically. Addressing citizens' grievances will enhance citizens' faith and trust in the government
3. The citizens, by and large, have been able to access the services, but as the socio-economic data shows, they are mostly the youth. There is a need to create awareness about the Act and its various provisions to educate citizens about the benefits of the Act.
4. There have been issues in accessing the services digitally. AI needs to be incorporated to improve the digital information for better service delivery. The advent of AI has opened up huge opportunities to revolutionize governance

practices and enhance service delivery efficiency. By harnessing AI technologies, the government can streamline processes, improve decision-making, and enhance service delivery to the citizens. This will result in heralding a new era of citizen-centric administration.

5. State Governments should invest in setting up a robust system of grievance redressal and accountability mechanisms, such as public hearings by top-level officials and grievance redress officers on a regular basis.
6. State governments must ensure proper resources and infrastructure with regular and appropriate training for the officials involved in the delivery of public services. Capacity building enhances the knowledge and skills of the officials.
7. The facility of social audit and community participation can help make the Act effective in its implementation.



Indian Institute of Public Administration (IIPA), an autonomous Institute of national eminence, was set up in 1954 to build capacity among public servants through training and research with knowledge, skills and behaviour required for managing the tasks of governance at the Centre and state level. In its efforts to enhance the leadership, management and administrative capability of the executive in government and public sector enterprises, the Institute works in close collaboration with national and international organisations. The Institute's training and research programmes link with its vast information management and experience-sharing activities. Building upon the vision of its founding fathers, IIPA aims to be one of the world's leading academic centres of thought and influence on public governance, policy-making and implementation to enable governance systems to become more responsive to the needs and aspirations of citizens and be aligned to human values in a democratic society. IIPA's role as a Professional Institution includes enhancing the leadership and managerial capabilities of executives in government, public sector enterprises, and other public organizations, as well as providing a platform for researchers to expand knowledge about public management. As such, IIPA positions itself at the forefront of progress in strengthening Public Management as a professional discipline, not least in relation to its teaching-and-learning enterprise.



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