



## Model Panchayat Citizens Charter

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### Why in News

Recently, the Union Minister of Panchayati Raj released a **Model Panchayat Citizens Charter.**

### Key Points

- **About:**
  - It is prepared by the **Ministry of Panchayati Raj (MoPR)** in collaboration with **National Institute of Rural Development & Panchayati Raj (NIRDPR)**.  
NIRDPR is an **autonomous organisation** under the **Union Ministry of Rural Development**.
  - It has been developed for the **delivery of the services across the 29 sectors**, aligning actions with localised **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**.
  - It is expected that the **Panchayats utilising this framework**, and with the due approval of **Gram Sabha**, would draw up a Citizens Charter, detailing the different **categories of services rendered to the citizen by the Panchayat**, the **conditions for such service** and also the time limit for such service.
  - It will help in **making the citizens aware of their rights** on the one hand, and to make the **Panchayats and their elected representatives directly accountable** to the people, on the other hand.
- **Significance:**
  - **Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs)** constitute the **third tier of government** in the rural areas and represent the **first level of Government interaction** for over **60%** of the Indian population.
  - PRIs are **responsible for delivery of basic services** as enshrined under **Article 243G of the Constitution of India**, specifically in the areas of Health & Sanitation, Education, Nutrition, Drinking Water.

- **Other Initiatives for PRIs:**

- **eGramSwaraj:**

It is a user-friendly web-based portal which unifies the planning, accounting and monitoring functions of Gram Panchayats.

- **Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan (RGSA):**

Launched in 2018, this centrally sponsored scheme is an effort in the direction of achieving “**Sabka Sath, Sabka Gaon, Sabka Vikas**”.

- **People's Plan Campaign (PPC)- Sabki Yojana Sabka Vikas:**

It aims to draw up **Gram Panchayat Development Plans (GPDPs)** in the country and place them on a website where anyone can see the status of the various government's flagship schemes.

## Citizen's Charter

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- **About:**

- It is a **voluntary and written document** that spells out the service provider's efforts taken to focus on their commitment towards fulfilling the needs of the citizens/customers.
    - It preserves the trust between the service provider and the citizens/users.
    - It includes what the citizens can expect out of the service provider.
    - It also includes how citizens can redress any grievances.
  - The concept was **first articulated and implemented in the United Kingdom** by the Conservative Government of John Major in 1991 as a national Programme.
  - Citizen's charters are **not legally enforceable documents**. They are **just guidelines to enhance service delivery to citizens**.

- **Originally Framed Principles:**

- Quality – Improving service quality.
  - Choice – Wherever possible.
  - Standards – Specifically mention what to expect and how to go about if standards are not met.
  - Value – For taxpayers' money.
  - Accountability – At the level of the individual and the organization.
  - Transparency – Transparency in rules/schemes/procedures/grievances.

- **Indian Initiative:**
  - In India, the concept of citizen's charter was first adopted at a '**Conference of Chief Ministers of various States and Union Territories**' held in May 1997.
    - A major outcome of the conference was a decision to formulate Citizen's Charters by the central and state governments, beginning with sectors with a large public interface such as the railways, telecom, posts, Public Distribution System, etc
    - The task of coordination, formulation, and operationalization of citizen's charters was done by the **Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG)**.
  - The **Right of Citizens for Time Bound Delivery of Goods and Services and Redressal of their Grievances Bill, 2011** (Citizens Charter) was introduced in the Lok Sabha in December 2011.  
It lapsed due to the dissolution of the Lok Sabha in 2014.
- **Need:**
  - To make administration accountable and citizen friendly.
  - To ensure transparency.
  - To take measures to improve customer service.
  - To adopt a stakeholder approach.
  - To save time for both Administration and the citizens.
- **Challenges in India:**
  - In a majority of cases, **not formulated through a consultative process** with cutting edge staff who will finally implement it.
  - Lack of meaningful and succinct Citizen's Charter, **absence of critical information that end-users need** to hold agencies accountable.
  - Only a **small percentage of end-users are aware of the commitments** made in the Citizen's Charter.
  - Measurable **standards of delivery are rarely defined** making it difficult to assess whether the desired level of service has been achieved or not.
  - Little interest shown by the organizations in adhering to their Citizen's Charter since there is **no citizen friendly mechanism** to compensate the citizen if the organization defaults.
  - Citizen's Charter has still **not been adopted by all Ministries/Departments**.  
This **overlooks local issues**.

## **Way Forward**

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- A Citizens' Charter **cannot be an end in itself, it is rather a means to an end** - a tool to ensure that the citizen is always at the heart of any service delivery mechanism.
- Drawing from best practice models such as the **Sevottam Model** (a Service Delivery Excellence Model) can help Citizen's Charter in becoming more citizen centric.

**Source: PIB**