



Model Panchayat Citizens Charter

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

▪ 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

- 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

PDF Reference URL: <https://www.drishtiias.com/printpdf/model-panchayat-citizens-charter>

