

EXTRACTS FROM CHAPTER FOUR OF THE TWELFTH REPORT OF SECOND ADMINISTRATIVE REFORMS COMMISSION – ‘CITIZEN CENTRIC ADMINISTRATION - The Heart of Governance’

CHAPTER 4

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 The Citizen’s Charter is an instrument which seeks to make an organization transparent, accountable and citizen friendly. A Citizen’s Charter is basically a set of commitments made by an organization regarding the standards of service which it delivers.

Every Citizen’s Charter has several essential components to make it meaningful:-

- (a) The Vision and Mission Statement of the organization. This gives the outcomes desired and the broad strategy to achieve these goals and outcomes. This also makes the user aware of the intent of their service provider and helps in holding the organization accountable.
- (b) The organization must clearly state in its Citizen’s Charter what subject it deals with and the service areas it broadly covers. This helps the user to understand the type of services they can expect from a particular service provider
- (c) The Citizen’s Charter should also stipulate the responsibilities of the citizens in the context of the Charter.

The commitments / promises at (a) and (b) constitute the heart of a Citizen’s Charter. Even though these promises are not enforceable in a court of law, each organization should ensure that the promises made are kept and, in case of default, a suitable compensatory / remedial mechanism should be provided.

4.6 In its Fourth Report on ‘Ethics in Governance’ the Commission has observed that in order to make Charters an effective tool for holding public servants accountable, the Charters should clearly spell out the remedy / penalty / compensation in case there is a default in meeting the standards spelt out in the Charter. It is emphasized that it is better to have a few promises which can be kept than a long list of lofty but impractical aspirations

RECOMMENDATION 4.6.2.

- a. Citizen’s Charters should be made effective by adopting the following principles:
 - i. One size does not fit all
 - ii. Citizen’s Charter should be prepared for each independent unit under the overall umbrella of the organization’s charter
 - iii. Wide consultation which include civil society in the process
 - iv. Firm commitments to be made

- v. Internal process and structure should be reformed to meet the commitments given in the Charter
- vi. Redress mechanism is case of default
- vii. Periodic evaluation of Citizen's Charters
- viii. Benchmark using end-user feedback
- ix. Hold officers accountable for results

4.8 A New Approach for Making Organizations Citizen Centric

4.8.1 Citizen's 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. The IS 15700:2005 of the Bureau of Indian Standards is an Indian Standard for Quality Management Systems. The Standard itself stipulates that a Quality Management System helps an organization to build systems which enable it to provide quality service consistently and is not a substitute for 'service standard'. In fact they are complementary to each other.

4.9 The ARC Seven Step Model for Citizen Centricity

- a. Define** all services which you provide and identify your clients
- b. Set** standards and norms for each service
- c. Develop** capability to meet the set standards
- d. Perform** to achieve the standards
- e. Monitor** performance against the set standards.
- f. Evaluate** the impact through an independent mechanism
- g. Continuous improvement** based on monitoring and evaluation of results

4.9.8 The Commission is of the view that the approach outlined in the model described is quite simple and there should be no difficulty for any organization or any of its units to adopt this approach and make it citizen centric. The Commission would like to recommend that the Union Government as well as State Governments should make this model mandatory for all public service organizations.

Extracts from the 12th Report of Second Administrative Reforms Commission – Chapter 4 pages 54-57)

Recommendation 4.9.9

- a. **The Union and State Governments should make the seven step model outlined in paragraph 4.9, mandatory for all organizations having public interface.**

Paragraph 4.9 The ARC Seven Step Model for Citizen Centricity

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- b. **Set** standards and norms for each service
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- g. **Continuous improvement** based on monitoring and evaluation of results

4.9.1 Step 1: Define Services

All organizational units should clearly identify the services they provide. Here the term service should have a broad connotation. Enforcement departments may think that enforcement is not a service. But this view is not correct. Even the task of enforcement of regulations has many elements of service delivery like issue of licenses, courteous behaviour etc. Normally any legitimate expectation by a citizen should be included in the term 'service' Defining the services would help the staff in an organization in understanding the links between what they do and the mission of the organization. In addition, the unit should also identify its clients and if the number of clients is too large it should categorize them into groups. This would be the first step in developing an insight into citizens' needs.

4.9.2 Set Standards

It has been well said that 'what cannot be measured never gets done'. Once the various services have been identified and defined, the next logical and perhaps the most important step is to set standards for each one of these services. A good starting point would be getting an input from the clients as to what their expectations are about each one of the identified services. Thereafter, based on their capability, the organization's overall goals and the citizens' expectations the unit should set standards to which they could commit. It is very important that these standards are

realistic and achievable. Complaints redress mechanism should form an integral part of this exercise. These standards should then form an integral part of the Citizen's Charter.

4.9.3 Step 3: Develop Capacity

Merely defining the services and setting standards for them would not suffice unless each unit has the capability for achieving them. Moreover, since the standards are to be upgraded periodically, it is necessary that capacity building also becomes a continuous process. Capacity building would include conventional training but also imbibing the right values, developing a customer centric culture within the organization and raising the motivation and morale of the staff.

4.9.4 Step 4: Perform

Having defined the standards as well as developed organizational capacity, internal mechanisms have to be evolved to ensure that each individual and unit in the organization performs to achieve the standards. Having a sound performance management system would enable the organizations to guide individuals' performance towards organizational goals.

4.9.5 Step 5: Monitor

Well articulated standards of performance would be meaningful only if they are adhered to. Each organization should develop a monitoring mechanism to ensure that the commitments made regarding the quality of service are kept. Since all commitments have to form a part of the Citizen's Charter, it would be desirable that an automatic mechanism is provided which signals any breach of committed standards. This would involve taking corrective measures continuously till the system stabilizes. Compliance to standards would be better if it is backed up by a system of rewards and punishments.

4.9.6. Step 6: Evaluate

It is necessary that there is an evaluation of the extent of customer satisfaction by an external agency. This evaluation could be through random survey, citizens' report card, obtaining feedback from citizens during periodic interactions or even an assessment by a professional body. Such an evaluation would bring out the degree to which the unit is citizen centric or otherwise. It would also highlight the areas wherein there have been improvements and those which require further improvements. This would become an input in the continuous review of the system.

4.9.7 Step 7: Continuous improvement

Improvement in the quality of services is a continuous process. With rising aspirations of the citizens new services would have to be introduced, based on the monitoring and evaluation, standards would have to be revised and even the internal capability and systems would require continuous up-gradation.