



## Citizen Charter

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# Citizen Charter

A Citizen Charter (CC) outlines an organisation's commitment to citizens on service standards, information, choice, accessibility, grievance redress, and value for money. It emphasises citizens as customers, ensuring services meet their needs.

- It includes the organisation's vision and mission, detailing desired outcomes and strategies
- Not legally enforceable or justiciable
- Origin: United Kingdom by **John Major's Conservative Government (1991)**
- **Global Initiatives:**
  - **Australia:** Service Charter (1997)
  - **Canada:** Service Standards Initiative (1995)
  - **France:** Service Charter (1992)
  - **India:** Citizens' Charter (1997)

## India's Citizens' Charter

### Background and Development:

- **Citizen Awareness (1990s):**
  - Economic growth and rising literacy heightened the demand for better governance
- **1997 Action Plan:**
  - **The Chief Ministers' Conference** led to the adoption of Citizens' Charters in high public-interaction sectors like Railways and Telecom, etc.
- **Expansion of CCs by 2005:**
  - 107 central and 629 state charters were formulated, with many available online

### Nodal Agency:

- **Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG) –**
  - Coordinates charter formulation across central and state agencies
  - Implements the Citizens' Charter

### Principles:

- Better service quality
- Wider choices
- Clear standards with procedures for unmet expectations
- Value for taxpayers' money
- Accountability
- Transparency in rules and grievances
- Service standards, fairness, and resource efficiency (**included in 1998**)

### Implementation Challenges:

- Charters often seen as **top-down directives**, resulting in minimal consultation and focus
- Employees **lacked adequate training**, impairing their ability to fulfil Charter commitments
- Inadequate efforts to educate the public about the Charters
- **Service standards** sometimes **too lax** or too strict, leading to dissatisfaction

### Suggestion - Sevottam Model (2<sup>nd</sup> ARC)

- It emphasises citizen entitlements through **Citizen Charters**, effective grievance redressal systems, and the need for organisations to enhance their service delivery capabilities.
- The 12<sup>th</sup> ARC report (2009) advocates for formulating **Citizen Charters to improve citizen interaction**, with the Government of India accepting this recommendation, including implementing pilot projects for state department charters.



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