India's Citizen's Charters
A Decade of Experience

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In 1997, the Government of India launched the ambitious "Citizen's Charter" initiative both in central and state government departments in an effort to make public service providers more open and accountable. This study tracks the progress and effectiveness of this reform over the past decade. The study assessed nearly 760 charters from across the country, followed by interviews with more than 1,100 end-users and over 320 officials from diverse departments. The distribution of Citizen's Charters by state and sector, design and content of the charters, access to and awareness about the charters, modalities of implementation, and impact on service delivery are analyzed in terms of both strengths and weaknesses. The study also highlights the implications for policy in order to take this reform forward.

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Abbreviations

DARPG	**Department of Administrative Reforms & Public Grievances**
DRDA	**District Rural Development Agency**
GOI	**Government of India**
NCT	**National Capital Territory of Delhi**
NPC	**National Productivity Council**
NGO	**Non-Government Organization**
OBC	**Other Backward Commission**
PAC	**Public Affairs Centre**
PTF	**Partnership for Transparency Fund**
TI	**Transparency International**
UK	**United Kingdom**

Citizen's Charters: An Overview

Navigating the bureaucracy in search of basic public services is often frustrating and bewildering. Deciphering the rules and regulations to apply for even basic documents like ration cards is often a difficult exercise for many Indians. This asymmetry in information is the well from which much of the corruption in the bureaucracy springs. After all, most ordinary citizens, lacking knowledge of how to apply for ration cards or driver's licenses, are simply forced to hire middlemen or directly bribe apparatchiks as they have few other options.

If only armed with essential information on public service providers, ordinary citizens would be able to demand proper service as a matter of right. Citizen's Charters, short, simple documents that outline service delivery standards, empower the public with such information. According to the Department of Administrative Reforms & Public Grievances (DARPG), the ministry spearheading the Citizen's Charters initiative, a Citizen's Charter is an understanding between ordinary citizens and public service providers which outlines the quantity and quality of service citizens can expect to receive in exchange for taxes or fees.

Emboldened by its promise and encouraged by its prior success in the United Kingdom, many public service providers of the Central and State Governments of India enacted Citizen's Charters almost a decade ago. By clearly outlining their obligations, public service providers are essentially committed to delivering service as per standards that they themselves have defined. In essence, Citizen's Charters not only empower end-users with critical information, but also force

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public service providers to live up to their obligations to ordinary citizens. Yet, the question remains as to the efficacy of Citizen's Charters in practice. Can ordinary citizens actually use Citizen's Charters as a tool to demand service that is in accordance with established standards?

To answer this question, Public Affairs Centre (PAC), Bangalore, launched a national review of Citizen's Charters in 2005. This report benchmarks hundreds of Citizen's Charters from across India to determine if such documents actually provide essential information on public service providers in a citizen-friendly fashion. Officials and ordinary citizens were then polled to determine their awareness of the concept and spirit behind Citizen's Charters. Ultimately, the goal is to determine if Citizen's Charters do indeed make public service delivery a more transparent and effective process.

Citizen's Charters in the United Kingdom

Citizen's Charters were first formulated in the United Kingdom in 1991 by the Conservative Government under Prime Minister John Major as a measure to refocus public services towards the needs and expectations of end-users. The program was subsequently modified and re-introduced by the Labor Government in 1998 under the banner "Services First". Public service providers that implemented a Citizen's Charter were expected to adopt the following operating principles:

- Set standards of service
- Be open and transparent
- Consult and involve end-users
- Encourage access and the promotion of choice
- Treat all fairly
- Put things right when they go wrong
- Use resources effectively
- Innovate and improve
- Work with other providers

The Citizen's Charter initiative in the UK led to the adoption of similar or modified programs by several other countries[1], including India in 1997. While specific regimes varied significantly, every country that adopted a Citizen's Charter initiative aimed to produce citizen-centric public services that focused on improving quality of services, standards conformity, and the grievance redress process.

Citizen's Charters in India

Citizen's Charters were first implemented in India in 1994 when consumer rights activists drafted a charter for health service providers at a meeting of the Central Consumer Protection Council in Delhi. In 1996, the Prime Minister initiated the Citizen's Charters program on a national level. The Citizen's Charter initiative in India saw fruition on the state level at a conference of Chief Ministers held in May 1997 where the "Action Plan for Effective and Responsive Government at the Centre and the State Levels" was adopted, paving the way for the formulation of charters among ministries, departments and agencies that have

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1 Australia (Service Charter, 1997), Belgium (Public Service Users' Charter, 1992), Canada (Service Standards Initiative, 1995), France (Service Charter, 1992), Jamaica (Citizens' charter, 1994), Malaysia (Client Charter, 1993), Portugal (The Quality Charter in public services, 1993) and Spain (The Quality Observatory, 1992).

significant public interaction. As the DARPG's *Citizen's Charters: A Handbook* says:

> "These charters were to include first, standards of services as well as time limits that the public could reasonably expect for service delivery, avenues of grievance redress, and a provision for independent scrutiny through the involvement of citizens and consumer groups."[2]

DARPG emphasized the need for consumer organizations, citizen groups, and other stakeholders to be closely involved when Citizen's Charters were being drafted in order to focus the documents towards the needs and requirements of end-users. Based on the UK model, DARPG outlined the following six components for inclusion in charters drafted by public agencies:

- Vision and mission statements
- Details of business transacted by the organization
- Details of clients
- Details of services provided to each client group
- Details of grievance redress mechanisms and how to access them
- Expectations from clients

Citizen's Charters in India: Current Status

Citizen's Charters have currently been in place in India for almost a decade. In 2006, the DARPG website listed 767 charters drafted by various government agencies around the country. The number of Citizen's Charters drafted by departments in the Central Government, State Governments, and

Union Territories is as follows[3]:
- Central Government: 112
- State Government: 588
- Union Territories: 67

After commissioning several third-party studies, DARPG has recently undertaken several measures to improve the implementation of Citizen's Charters by public agencies. These measures include the development of a comprehensive website (goicharters.nic.in), a model for external and internal evaluation of charters, regional seminars to build awareness of charters among stakeholders, and capacity-building workshops[4].

Prior Literature

DARPG and other interested groups have undertaken several albeit limited evaluations of the implementation of the Citizen's Charter program in India. A brief account of these reviews follows.

Evaluation by DARPG
DARPG, with the Consumer Coordination Council, New Delhi, undertook an evaluation of the Citizen's Charters program in 1998. Subsequently, a professional agency was engaged from 2002 to 2003 to develop a standardized model for internal and external evaluations of charters. This agency evaluated 5 charters drafted by agencies in the

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2 Citizen's Charters – A Handbook, DARPG

3 As of June 2007, the DARPG updated their website to list 829 Citizen's Charters, with Central ministries having 118 charters and State & Union Territories having 711.

4 Following the model of the "Charter Mark" system in the UK, which recognizes and encourages excellence in public services, DARPG has evolved a symbol of excellence, SEVOTTAM, which is expected to present an option to measure and manage performance on service delivery from the citizens' perspective.

Central Government and 15 charters drafted by various departments in 3 State Governments. It was found that charters were generally not formulated through a consultative process, service providers were not familiar with the "philosophy, goals and main features" of charters, and the program was not adequately publicized to ensure awareness of charters among end-users.

As such, DARPG has been aware of the need to strengthen the Citizen's Charter program for some time. The agency has itself concluded that "over the years, while many public service delivery organizations have formulated Citizen's Charters, there was no corresponding improvement in the levels of citizens' satisfaction and quality of services being developed[5]." DARPG's initiative to establish standards for service quality (Bureau of Indian Standards) and the Sevottam model was a reaction to this evaluation.

Review of Citizens' Charters in Karnataka by PAC

The Public Affairs Centre (PAC) undertook a preliminary assessment of Citizen's Charters drafted by eight major departments in the Government of Karnataka with substantial public dealings. The review critically evaluated the contents of charters and assessed the quality of their contents by analyzing the following components of Citizen's Charters:

- Basic information about the department
- Standards of services
- Grievance redress system
- Citizen-friendly criteria

PAC analysts found that none of

5   Official letter dated 22nd Feb, 2006, addressed to Chairman, PAC.

the charters studied for the report fully complied with the guiding principles of the Citizen's Charter initiative. In fact, some charters were just mere statements of the department's vision or a thin outline of services provided. The Public Affairs Centre concluded that none of the charters qualified as a "Citizen's Charter" in the real sense of the term. Moreover, the charters did little in terms of guaranteeing proper service delivery. However, researchers found great awareness of Citizen's Charters among the staff of offices reviewed. Given that appropriate frameworks for implementing charters had not been put in place at the time of analysis, the review revealed a wide gap between the formulation and the implementation of charters.

In conclusion, the PAC report established that the objective of increasing transparency in public service delivery had not been achieved due to major flaws in the design and implementation of charters. The PAC review also clearly revealed the need for the government to take proactive steps towards preparing and implementing robust charters by involving civil servants of all levels, ordinary citizens, and civil society organizations when formulating charters to generate a sense of ownership amongst stakeholders. Suggestions for improvement from officials surveyed in the report included the need to put in place a system for proper implementation of the charters both in head offices as well as in field units.

Review of Citizens' Charters in the National Capital Territory of Delhi

Transparency International (TI), India conducted a study of 10 Citizen's Charters of the Government

of the National Capital Territory (NCT) of Delhi and two departments of the Central Government. The study found that all 10 charters drafted by agencies in the NCT lacked basic and essential ingredients of an ideal Citizen's Charter such as listing specific services offered, location and timing of offices, names, addresses and telephone numbers of key officials, standards of service delivery, details of grievance redress authorities, and provision of a compensation clause. The study also noted that 70% of intended beneficiaries were not aware of the existence of Citizen's Charters. Worse, agency staff themselves were generally unaware that their office had enacted a Citizen's Charter. Based on the study, TI made several recommendations to improve the drafting and implementation of Citizen's Charters and also offered to assist the NCT in formulating, reviewing, and implementing charters.

Evaluation of Citizen's Charters in the State of Gujarat

The National Productivity Council (NPC) conducted a far-reaching review of Citizen's Charters in Gujarat to benchmark the implementation of such charters, assess the charters themselves, and suggest possible improvements to enhance the effectiveness of the charter program by analyzing the views of beneficiaries and employees. Departments were categorized as either "Excellent", "Very Good", "Good", or "Poor" based on an index made of 32 separate metrics benchmarking Citizen's Charter implementation. Although the study covered 23 departments and 142 offices in the Gujarat State Government, the report found no department whose implementation of the Citizen's

Charter program could be considered "Excellent", "Very Good" or "Good". It was also observed that while 64% of ordinary citizens surveyed were unaware of Citizen's Charters, 86% of government employees reported being aware of the initiative. Furthermore, nearly 85% of the government employees surveyed were not trained to implement Citizen's Charters. Incidentally, a majority of these government officials were dissatisfied with the quality of service delivery of their own agency.

India's Citizen's Charters: A Decade of Experience

There is palpably growing realization among citizens of their entitlement to high quality service from public service providers. This has arisen from shifting social mores due to post-liberalization economic growth coupled with an increase in public participation in civil society due to the passage of the 74th Amendment to the Constitution and the development of Panchayati Raj institutions. Expectations of public service delivery have also increased because of growing competition from the private sector, especially in areas where state monopolies have been dismantled. The recent enactment of the Right to Information Act has further enhanced aspirations for improved public service delivery and good governance.

An in-depth review of the Citizen's Charter initiative, which was conceptualized as a tool to increase accountability among service providers, is timely and needed. It must be noted that the previously outlined evaluations of the Citizen's Charter program were limited in scope, and aimed to cover

the program only in parts. Since the Citizen's Charter initiative was launched on an all India basis in 1997, no major broad-based study has been attempted prior to this report. As such, there was a need for a national review to assess the effectiveness and utility of the charter regime, as it exists, both at the Central and State levels. Given this need, PAC has undertaken a National Review of Citizens' Charters, resulting in this report.

Objectives of the National Review
The main objectives of the National Review were to:
- Analyze and evaluate Citizen's Charters prepared by the Government of India (GOI) and State Governments or public agencies of India against internationally recognized design criteria and related principles.
- Examine the extent to which Citizen's Charters have been implemented in practice and measure their effectiveness in increasing transparency by interviewing officials and end-users.
- Disseminate findings widely and initiate a national dialogue with the Government of India to identify the actions required to meet any deficiencies identified by this exercise.

Methodology of the National Review
Beginning in December 2005, the Public Affairs Centre conducted the National Review over a period of 15 months by employing its own staff along with external consultants and market research personnel. The review was carried out in the following manner:
- The Department of Administrative Reforms & Public Griev-

ances (DARPG), the nodal ministry for Citizens' Charters, was informed of the project. The papers and reports furnished by the DARPG provided a useful starting point for this project. Additional information was obtained through correspondence with several Chief Secretaries.
- The above authorities were also requested to produce copies of all charters drafted under their purview for analysis. Unfortunately, responses were few and far between[6]. DARPG, which provided several useful documents, was the exception. However, some State Governments did refer PAC to their respective web sites, and provided copies of the guidelines and instructions various departments used to formulate and implement Citizen's Charters.
- The Project Team collected 561 charters from various web sites and government departments for a preliminary review. The preliminary review was intended to weed out purely nominal charters (those that did not even meet the basic norms and characteristics of a Citizen's Charter) and to identify about 200 charters that would qualify for a desk review[7].
- The desk review was intended to evaluate selected charters against internationally recognized design criteria and to analyze their actual utility to citizens. An ideal Citizen's Charter would inform citizens on all essential information on services provided by a given government department con-

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6   Himachal Pradesh, Haryana, Rajasthan, Kerala, Union Territories of Andaman, Goa.
7   See Chapter 2

cerned, the manner in which services could be accessed, and any and all grievance redress mechanisms.

- 80 charters were then selected for an extensive field survey based on the findings of the desk review. The field survey was conducted in Andhra Pradesh, Haryana, Karnataka, Punjab, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, and the National Capital Territory of Delhi, and Chandigarh Administration. The field survey aimed to verify the effectiveness of the implementation of Citizen's Charters by visiting selected offices and holding interviews with officials of the departments, agencies, and actual users. Interviews were based on structured questionnaires. Assistance was provided by Non-Government Organizations[8] and independent investigators, under the overall supervision of the Project Team.

- Once the desk review and field survey were completed, the data generated was analyzed and reviewed.

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7 Catalyst Trust (Tamil Nadu) and Sadhana (Karnataka).

The Preliminary Review

Chapter 2

The main objective of the preliminary review was to scrutinize all available Citizen's Charters in order to select 200 charters for a detailed desk review. As such, the charters studied in the preliminary review were tested to determine how many of the essential components that were expected of a legitimate Citizen's Charter were included in those documents. The 10 essential elements that a Citizen's Charter was expected to have are the following:

- Vision/Mission/Objectives of the Department/Agency
- Details of Business Transacted or General Services Provided
- Name, Address, and Phone Numbers of Key Officials
- Procedures to Avail Services
- Information on the Costs of Services Provided
- Standards of Services (Time Limits, etc)
- Grievance Redress Mechanism
- Names, Addresses, Phone Numbers of Officials in Charge of the Grievance Redress Mechanism
- Duties of Citizens
- Simple and User-friendly Language

Sourcing Charters for Review

A major problem at the onset of the project was the difficulty in sourcing Citizen's Charters. Unfortunately, neither the nodal ministry nor individual state governments could provide copies of all charters drafted under their purview. Therefore, the project team had to source charters from what was available on department or agency web sites. The team was able to ob-

tain a total of 561 charters out of the 767 charters mentioned on the DARPG web site. The proportion of charters obtained was deemed to be acceptable. After eliminating 7 charters that were incomplete, non-cohesive or a repetition, a total 554 charters were subject to verification in the preliminary review, as detailed in Table 2.1.

Regional Imbalances in the Availability of Charters

Table 2.1 reveals the inequitable availability of charters between regions. While the Southern Region, comprised of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu, has the largest share of charters that are subject to review, the Eastern and North-East Regions only have a few charters included in the review. The representation of charters by the Western and Northern Regions may be regarded as reasonable. This imbalance is indicative of the relative ease in obtaining Citizen's Charters in some regions over others. For example, a greater number of charters are available on the websites of the governments of Tamil Nadu or Andhra Pradesh compared to the website of the government of Orissa.

Distribution of Charters by Sector

The available charters were categorized into six sectors based on the functional grouping of the departments in which a charter

Table 2.1: Distribution of Charters Reviewed for the Preliminary Review by Region

Region	# of States/Union Territories	# of Charters Reviewed	% of Total
Central Ministries & Agencies	-	63	11.4
Central Commercial Agencies	-	49	8.8
Northern Region	9	82	14.8
Western Region	4	84	15.2
Eastern Region	3	5	0.9
Northeastern Region	8	9	1.6
Southern Region	4	195	35.2
Union Territories	6	67	12.1
Total	**34**	**554**	**100**

Table 2.2: Distribution of Charters Reviewed for the Preliminary Review by Sector

Sectors	Departments and Agencies	# of Charters	% of Total
Social Development	Education, Health, Science & Technology, Public Distribution System, Culture	152	27.4
Agricultural & Rural Development	Agriculture, Rural Development	47	8.5
Infrastructure & Financial services	Infrastructure, Banking, Finance, Transport, Communication	154	27.8
Environment	Environment, Natural Resources.	24	4.3
Industry	Industry, Commerce, Textiles, Tourism	96	17.4
General Administration	General Administration, Police	81	14.6
Total		**554**	**100**

was drafted. However, the categorization was not based on recognized government classifications but on the perceptions of ordinary citizens. The distribution of charters in each sector is indicated in Table 2.2.

Methodology

Citizen's Charters were scored by counting how many of the essential elements described at the beginning of this chapter each charter had. For example, a charter could have all 10 components, for a total score of 10. This score was not intended to reflect the quality or usefulness of a charter, but was meant to be a guide to its structure. Charters that had 6 of the essential components were primarily selected for this review. However, since a rigid application of the above standard would have resulted in the under representation of charters from certain regions and states, some charters were included in the desk

review at the discretion of the project team. Table 2.3 and Table 2.4 highlight the distribution of charters by sector and region.

Findings

Although intended as a preliminary step towards selecting charters for the desk review, many useful findings emerged from this review. These findings are highlighted below:

• There is no comprehensive listing of the Citizen's Charters available at the Central and State levels.

• Charters drafted by agencies in the Western and Northern regions are more likely to have 6 or more of the essential components of an ideal charter than charters from other regions. Of the documents studied for this report, 83% and 72% of charters that were drafted by agencies in the Western region and Northern region, respectively, had six

of the essential components of an ideal charter as described in the beginning of the section.

- Charters drafted by ministries of Union Territories or the Central Government are more easily accessible on the Internet than charters drafted by agencies at the state level. Charters drafted by Central Commercial Organizations, including banks, were the most accessible among agencies reviewed. Among the States, Andhra Pradesh, National Capital Territory of Delhi, Rajasthan and Tamil Nadu provide the best accessibility with linkage at one window.
- Many charters are simply based off templates provided by the nodal ministry, which raises doubts of their customization.
- The charters of the Central ministries are bilingual and available in English on their websites while those of several states are only available in regional languages.
- There is substantial variation in the format, length and content of Citizen's Charters across agencies and states. Some are presented as a list of frequently asked questions while others are tabular lists of standards. Some are lengthy while others are abrupt.
- Some charters posted on websites are simply poorly scanned versions of paper documents, making them difficult to read and understand.
- Some charters contain information, such as messages from ministers or preambles, which unnecessarily add to the length of the document.

Table 2.3: Distribution of Charters Selected for the Desk Review by Region

Region	# of Charters	% of Total
Northern Region	40	20.0
Western Region	40	20.0
Southern Region	45	22.5
Eastern Region	4	2.0
North-Eastern Region	8	4.0
Union Territories	16	8.0
Central Ministries & Organizations	33	16.5
Central Commercial Agencies	14	7.0
Total	**200**	**100**

Table 2.4: Distribution of Charters subjected for the Desk Review by Sector

Sectors	# of Charters	% of Total
Social Development	50	25
Agriculture & Rural Development	32	16
Infrastructure / Financial Services	52	26
Environment	8	4
Industry / Commerce	30	15
General Administration	28	14
Total	**200**	**100**

The Desk Review

Chapter 3

Nearly 200 Citizen's Charters drafted by agencies from around the country were analyzed by PAC researchers to investigate the quality of their contents. Details of the regions and sectors from which the charters in this review were selected are in Chapter 2 and in the Appendix. The main objectives of the desk review were the following:

To qualitatively assess if charters:
- Have the essential components of an ideal Citizen's Charter
- Are designed to facilitate service delivery
- Are drafted in simple and direct style

Determine if charters provide adequate information about:
- The department in question
- Details and standards of service offered by the department

- Client specifications
- Procedures to apply for service
- Grievance redress mechanisms
- Expectations of citizens

Evaluation & Scoring

The quality of each Citizen's Charter reviewed for this report was judged by a member of the PAC project team using a 41 question evaluation that sought to measure the effectiveness of the following sections of a charter:

i. Vision & Mission Statements
ii. Functions of Departments
iii. Related Legislation
iv. Information about Department
v. List of Services
vi. Established Standards
vii. Citizen's Duties
viii. Citizen's Rights and Compensation
ix. Grievance Redress Mechanism
x. Charter Characteristics/Citizen Friendly Approach

When evaluating a Citizen's Charter, PAC researchers examined the content of each of the sections listed above to determine the quality of information that section provided. Each section listed above was expected to contain a certain set of components to be considered adequate. For example, the "List of Services" section was expected to contain the procedures users have to follow to apply for services, among others. Researchers subjectively judged each such component to be adequate, inadequate, or missing, and assigned that component a point value based on its relative importance. A charter was graded by summing these point values. Each charter could receive a maximum of 100 points. As Table 3.1 shows, no charter evaluated for this study was scored "Very Good" and only a third of the charters reviewed were judged "Good". In fact, most of the charters evaluated were merely "Average". The fact that nearly 68% of the charters evaluated had a score of 50 or below is indicative of the inadequate attention paid by most departments to the formulation of their Citizen's Charter.

Analysis by Sector

The average grades that charters received by sector in addition to the average score a charter received for each component are shown in Table 3.2. The following findings emerge from this data.

The fact that the average grade of charters reviewed is 43.9 confirms that most charters do not contain every necessary component of an ideal Citizen's Charter. While charters drafted by departments in the environmental sector provide the most information

Table 3.1: Representation of Overall Quality and Relevance of Charters

Overall Grading	# of Charters	% of Charters
Very Good (76-100)	0	0
Good (51-75)	64	32
Average (26-50)	119	60
Poor (0-25)	17	9
Total	**200**	**100**

about those agencies, charters drafted by departments in the social sector, which primarily cater to the poor and indigent, provide the least information. In essence, the worst Citizen's Charters are drafted by agencies that serve the greatest number of ordinary end-users, most of whom are poor and uneducated, and the best charters are drafted by agencies that directly affect the least number of citizens.

Agencies do not seem to be following the protocol to certify their Citizen's Charters. DARPG guidelines require that agencies employ a task force consisting of middle to top level officials, cutting-edge staff, staff associations, and citizen groups to formulate their Citizen's Charter. Once drafted, a Citizen's Charter must be submitted for approval to the DARPG core committee to ensure its validity and quality. Given the abysmal ratings of most Citizen's Charters studied for this report, it is evident that agencies are ignoring this protocol.

Analysis of Charter Contents

PAC researchers evaluated and analyzed the content of nearly 200 Citizen's Charters from around India. Their analysis of the quality of each of the ten components of a Citizen's Charter follows.

Table 3.2: Average Grades Received by Charters by Sector

Charter Component	% of Total Score Obtained						
	Social Dev.	Agriculture & Rural Dev.	Infrastructure	Environment	Industry	General Admin.	Overall
Vision & Mission Statement	68%	69%	76%	83%	85%	64%	73%
Business Transacted	81%	84%	91%	91%	81%	88%	85%
Related Legislation	37%	14%	26%	50%	34%	67%	35%
Information About Dept.	41%	54%	40%	85%	58%	59%	50%
List of Services	24%	21%	22%	24%	22%	25%	23%
Quality Standards	50%	61%	69%	59%	59%	44%	57%
Citizen's Duties	41%	28%	54%	63%	23%	41%	41%
Rights & Compensation	20%	17%	24%	31%	12%	26%	21%
Grievance Redress	36%	39%	39%	59%	38%	34%	38%
Citizen Friendly Measures	62%	61%	67%	61%	59%	51%	63%
Overall (% of Total Points)	**41%**	**43%**	**45%**	**55%**	**44%**	**44%**	**44%**
Avg. Score (Points)	**41.2**	**42.7**	**45.2**	**54.5**	**44.2**	**44.1**	**43.9**

Note: Percentages indicate the average fraction of the total possible number of points (100) a Citizen's Charter could receive for a given charter component.

Vision & Mission Statements
DARPG norms stipulate that departments drafting Citizen's Charters include both a vision and a mission statement at the head of the document. Vision statements should highlight a department's commitment to continuously improve its standards of the service on a sustained basis through innovation. Almost 85% of the charters reviewed included a clear mission statement and 83% highlighted the goals or purpose of the drafting agency. Only 34% of the charters reviewed had separated out its vision and mission statements. As most charters reviewed included a mission statement, the performance of government departments in this regard is satisfactory, although de-partments should make an effort to separate their vision and mission statements in their Citizen's Charters.

Functions of Departments
Along with mission statements, a department drafting a Citizen's Charters must detail what it does and whom it aims to serve. Such details should include not only a list of the department's tasks, but also information outlining its target clientele and the laws and regulations that govern the institution. Almost 91% of the charters reviewed contain one or more of these details. However, only 73% outline the target clientele of a drafting agency and less than 33% refer to the laws and rules that govern that depart-

ment. The absence of governing laws in charters places end-users at a disadvantage when departments do not perform up to set standards since, in such a situation, affected users would not be aware of their legal options.

Information about Departments

Citizen's Charters must include the addresses and telephone numbers of department offices, in addition to agency website and email addresses. Only 53% of the charters reviewed provided all such information. 52% provided telephone numbers and 36% provided office addresses. Less than 34% of charters reviewed provided links to department websites, which are highly useful to urban, educated end-users.

Details of Key Officials

In order to lift the veil of secrecy that often hangs over many departments, it is essential that names, telephone numbers, and email addresses of key officials are listed in Citizen's Charters. End-users, when encountering a problem or grievance, could then use this information to contact officials to file a complaint or demand action. This in turn would increase accountability among bureaucrats. Unfortunately, only 42% of the charters reviewed listed such information on key officials.

Procedures to Apply for Service

Only 57% of the charters reviewed actually guide end-users on how to access the services that such departments offer. Just 28% of the

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Box 3.1: A Citizen Unfriendly Charter!

The Citizen's Charter drafted by the Kerala State Police Department claims that "in view of the quasi-judicial work done by the police department, it would neither be possible, nor desirable to introduce a regular and direct social monitoring, unlike in the case of other service departments." Furthermore, in the case of police work, there is "no question of any monitoring by any person or agency (including the society at large), which has not been authorized to do so by a specific law or statute."

The charter also states that "enquiries of petitions are not, in strict legal terms, the job of the police; if the police have been attending to such matters, it should be regarded as a consequence of historical compulsion. If one does not have faith in the system, he is at liberty to get his grievances redressed through the 'prescribed channels' etc. Therefore, 'those who affix their signatures in the petitions registers are not expected to question the integrity or motives of the police in arriving at a particular solution."

There are no time limits outlined in the charter for certain expected duties such as informing a friend or relative of a person detained by the police for interrogation. Instead, the charter uses the term "as soon as practicable" to refer to such an obligation. Similarly, in case a woman is arrested, the charter states that a female police officer should "as far as possible" be a member of the arresting party.

Box 3.2: A Department That Takes Accountability Seriously

The Hyderabad Water Supply and Sewerage Board (HWSSB) is a good example of a department that has taken steps towards increasing accountability through its Citizen's Charter by not only including a clear description of the department's service quality standards in the document, but also guaranteeing compensation to end-users when service delivery does not meet those standards. For example, the HWSSB guarantees that applications for water or sewage connections will be processed within 15 to 30 days of submission, and acknowledgement that an application has been processed will be forwarded to the applicant 15 days thereafter. The charter goes on to state that customers, in the event that the HWSSB has taken more than 30 days to process an application, can contact a single window cell at the HWSSB head office to file a formal complaint. After filing a complaint, the HWSSB will pay the complainant the token sum of Rs. 20, at which point the HWSSB has a further 15 days to process the application. If the HWSSB has still not processed the application after the 15 day grace period, the Managing Director of the department must personally handle the file.

In the event of disruptions to an end-user's water supply, the HWSSB charter states that customers can lodge a complaint through a telephone helpline. After a complaint has been lodged, the HWSSB has two days to restore a customer's water supply. If the department cannot do so, the HWSSB must provide the complainant 250 liters of water per day until the connection is restored.

charters reviewed provided procedural information that was judged to be clear and concise. Another 16% outlined procedural information that was considered incomplete. The remaining charters did not contain any procedural information at all. Few if any of the charters reviewed outlined how users could apply for services through agency websites. Online applications not only are more convenient for urban, educated end-users with Internet access, but also significantly reduce departmental overhead if deployed strategically. Additionally, few agencies offer users "single-window" access to services. As the name implies, single-window service allows users to submit applications and obtain documents at one window, thereby avoiding the hassle of shuttling between offices to obtain forms, signatures, seals, or anything else an official may ask of an end-user. Only 4% of the charters reviewed mention that the drafting department offers single-window service.

Standards of Service
Possibly the most important purpose of a Citizen's Charter is to provide users service quality standards, such as baseline turnaround times, against which performance can be judged. End-users, armed with these quality standards, can then hold agencies accountable when service is slow or lacking. Unfortunately, only 56% of the charters reviewed clearly outlined departmental service quality standards.

Eligibility & Rights
Like the chapter on "Citizen's Duties" in the Constitution, the inclu-

sion of the obligations of citizens in Citizen's Charters is an innovation in the Indian context. The Citizen's Obligations section of a charter is intended to inform end-users of the pre-requisites needed to apply for certain public services. For example, only ration card holders are eligible to purchase foodstuffs from civil supplies stores. As such, the Citizen's Obligations section not only acts as a checklist that end-users can use to determine whether they fulfill the requisite conditions needed to apply for service, but also acts as a disclaimer for agencies when service cannot be delivered to those who are not eligible. Just 51% of charters reviewed included a section on Citizen's Obligations. About 34% of charters reviewed included a section on Citizen's Rights. About 11% of the charters

reviewed included an *incomplete* section on Citizen's Rights.

Compensation

After the liberalization of the Indian economy, a sea-change has occurred in how ordinary citizens conceptualize public service. No more are public services considered mere grants or concessions by end-users. Instead, citizens now consider public service to be something that must be provided – as a right – by the government in return for fees or taxes. As such, when providers fail to deliver service as per established standards, end-users should be compensated. For example, during service delays, the Karnataka State Pollution Control Board pays Rs. 50 for every day it exceeds the standard turnaround time stipulated in its Citizen's

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Box 3.3: Lost in Translation

The Citizen's Charter of the Department of Social Welfare and Nutritious Meals (DSWNM), Tamil Nadu is a well-drafted document that comprehensively covers the agency's mission to assist the disabled. However, the Citizen's Charter of the Directorate of Rehabilitation of the Disabled, an agency under the purview of the DSWNM, just lists the various services the agency provides without detailing how exactly potential end-users could apply for those services. Furthermore, the charter lack certain critical components that every Citizen's Charter is expected to have, such as a mission statement, contact information for key official, fees, service quality standards, and details of the departmental grievance redress mechanism.

Lastly, the language used in the English version of the charter is essentially incomprehensible, perhaps due to a poor translation from the charter's original Tamil. Below is an unedited excerpt from the charter that illustrates this:

Braille Watches:
Braille watches are distributed free (to) visually handicapped working blind persons.

- Income Rs. 24,000 per annum.
- Self-employed persons.
- Working in unorganized sectors

Box 3.4: A Charter That Leaves Users Guessing

A Citizen's Charter that fails to provide critical information to end-users is that of the "Khadi and Village Industries Commission," under the Central Government. While outlining the values and mission of the agency, the KVIC's Citizen's Charter leaves users guessing as to the specific services that the agency actually provides. Under its service quality standards section, the charter only mentions that the KVIC will respond to enquiries within the shortest possible time, and that if delays occur, the reasons would be communicated. The charter provides the phone number of a public relations officer who may be contacted for any information on the commission's activities.

For all practical purposes, the Citizen's Charter of the KVIC is of little value to its end-users, some of whom may be poorly educated or low-income. By reading this charter, end-users have no way to understand what services the KVIC provides, and have no ability to hold the agency accountable if services are delivered in an unsatisfactory fashion.

Charter. Yet, few agencies include a compensation clause in their Citizen's Charter like the Karnataka State Pollution Control Board does. Of the charters reviewed for this report, just 4% included a compensation clause.

Grievance Redress Mechanism
One of the most important rights a citizen has is the right to redress grievances. As such, service providers must have a robust grievance redress mechanism to address end-user concerns. In fact, according to the DARPG, lacking such a mechanism, a Citizen's Charter, whose very purpose is to provide information to allow citizens to redress their grievances, is moot. Nearly 54% of charters reviewed fully outlined the grievance redress structure of the drafting agency in detail while a further 32% outlined grievance redress options somewhat incompletely. While it is comforting that most agencies allow their users some form of grievance redress, the procedural informa-

tion that such departments provide in their Citizen's Charters on how end-users can actually file formal complaints have several shortcomings:

Specifying how and where to register complaints
Most agencies have a designated official with whom formal complaints can be filed. Additionally, some departments require that formal complaints be drafted in a specific format. Yet, only 50% of the charters reviewed indicate the official to whom complaints must be addressed and the format in which such complaints must be drafted in.

Time when complaints could be registered
Formal complaints often can only be submitted at specific times during the day. However, only 17% of the charters reviewed indicate when users can submit their grievances.

Procedure to acknowledge complaints

Procedure to acknowledge complaints

After a formal complaint has been submitted to an agency, end-users should expect to receive an acknowledgement that their complaint is being considered. In addition, users should be informed the timeframe in which their complaints will be resolved. However, only 22% of the charters reviewed clearly indicated that users were entitled to receive an acknowledgement or a commitment that complaints would be resolved within a given timeframe after a formal complaint was submitted.

Provision for appeals to higher authorities

In the event that an agency does not satisfactorily resolve a formal complaint, users should have access to an appellate authority. Only 28% of the charters reviewed indicated the method in which users could appeal an unsatisfactory resolution to a formal complaint.

Use of Simple Language

A Citizen's Charter must be drafted in simple, concise language to maximize its usefulness to an ordinary citizen. As such, DARPG recommends that departments draft Citizen's Charters by collaborating with civil society organizations and ordinary end-users to ensure that the final document is easily readable by a large audience. 97% of the charters reviewed for this report were judged to be written simply and concisely by PAC researchers. 85% of the charters reviewed were judged to be of reasonable length.

Availability in Local Languages

Many charters reviewed for this report failed to indicate if the document was available in a regional language. However, it is possible many departments print diglot editions of Citizen's Charters as per state language policy, but do not indicate local language availability on English versions of charters. The Pudicherry Administration is an example of an agency that provides information on the availability of its charters in regional languages.

Other Deficiencies

Below is a list of the other qualities that the Citizen's Charters reviewed for this report lacked.

Charters are rarely updated. Charters reviewed for this report rarely show signs for being updated even though some documents date back from the inception of the Citizen's Charter program nearly a decade ago. Just 6% of charters reviewed even make the assurance that the document will be updated some time after release. In addition, few charters indicate the date of release. Needless to say, the presence of a publication date assures end-users of the validity of a charter's contents.

End-users and NGOs are not consulted when charters are drafted. Civil society organizations and end-users are generally not consulted when charters are being formulated. As a Citizen's Charter's primary purpose is to make public service delivery more citizen-centric, agencies must investigate the needs of end-users when formulating charters by consulting with ordinary citizens and civil society organizations.

Many agencies do not publicize where copies of Citizen's Charters can be obtained. Just 3 charters

reviewed for this report indicate where users can source the document.

The needs of senior citizens and the disabled are not considered when drafting charters. Just one charter reviewed for this report assured equitable access to disabled users or senior citizens. Many agencies actually do cater to the needs of the disadvantaged or elderly, but do not mention these services in their charter.

Summary

- No charter reviewed for this report included all 10 of the essential components of an ideal Citizen's Charter. In fact, just a third of the charters reviewed scored above 50 out of 100 when graded by PAC researchers.
- Charters drafted by agencies in the Environmental sectors were generally the best in terms of overall quality while charters drafted by agencies in the Social Development sector were among the worst.
- While most Citizen's Charters reviewed generally include a mission statement and out-

line the primary function of the drafting department, many charters do not detail the procedures users have to follow to apply for service.
- Almost all charters were written in simple, concise English. However, most charters did not specify if the document was available in a regional language.
- Nearly 56% of the charters reviewed outlined the service quality standards of the drafting agency in some form.
- About half of the charters reviewed provided addresses and phone numbers of drafting agency. Even fewer provided contact details for key officials. Almost 33% included links to department websites.
- Only 54% outlined the departmental grievance redress mechanism with clarity. Many charters did not detail the officials to whom formal complaints needed to be addressed to or explained how departments would acknowledge or resolve grievances.
- Only 4% of the charters reviewed outlined a compensation scheme when service is inadequate.

Evidence from the Field

A nationwide survey was conducted in 8 states and several Central ministries to measure the success of the Citizen's Charter program in practice. Ordinary end-users were asked about their own experiences with public service providers to determine the quality of service provided by agencies that have implemented a Citizen's Charter. Additionally, officials employed by service providers were polled to investigate their commitment towards quality service. Investigators, examining 80 charters, interviewed a total of 1,177 users. 325 officials at various levels were also queried. Table 4.1 outlines the states in which this survey was conducted.

User Perceptions of Service Providers

In order to assess the impact Citizen's Charters have had on increasing service quality, end-users were asked about their experiences and satisfaction with service providers that have implemented a charter. Below are our findings.

A significant proportion of users feel that service quality is average to poor. End-users were asked to grade the overall performance of an agency on a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being the highest score. Given that Citizen's Charters are intended to act as catalysts for service quality improvements, it is unfortunate that nearly 48% of users of agencies that have adopted a charter

Table 4.1: Details of the Field Survey

State	# of Charters	# of Users Interviewed	# of Officials Interviewed
Andhra Pradesh	8	126	34
Chandigarh	6	82	-
Delhi	12	156	89
Haryana	6	90	3
Karnataka	8	104	29
Punjab	3	45	7
Rajasthan	10	133	26
Tamil Nadu	11	217	47
Central Agencies	16	224	90
Total	**80**	**1,176**	**318**

still grade that department's performance as average to poor. This indicates that many departments must go beyond merely drafting charters and actually implement systemic changes that have a real impact on service quality.

Most dissatisfied users do not file formal complaints. Of those that were dissatisfied with a service provider, just 36% reported filing a formal complaint while a further 68% of those who were dissatisfied but did not file a formal complaint actually wanted to file a complaint, but could not do so for various reasons. Anecdotal evidence suggests that dissatisfied users that did not file a formal complaint failed to do so because they were unaware of grievance redress options. As the DARPG's Handbook on Citizen's Charters itself says:

> …most dissatisfied customers do not complain; complaints may not be registered not because people think it is not worth the time and effort, but because they may not know how or where to complain, or they may believe that the department would be indifferent to them…

However, about 87% of those who did file a formal complaint found the procedure to be simple. Almost 63% had their complaint acknowledged and 68% had their complaints resolved within the time period stipulated by a Citizen's Charter.

Service delivery needs to be more efficient. Just 27% of users were able to complete work, such as document processing, in one visit to an office. In fact, almost 42% of users surveyed had to visit an office three times or more before their work was completed. Needless to say, many agencies must improve turnaround times in order to strengthen their implementation of Citizen's Charters.

The procedures for applying for service are relatively simple. Most users feel that submitting an application to a government office is relatively painless. Nearly 76% of

users surveyed felt that the procedure to apply for service was simple and convenient and almost 80% of users found that application forms were readily available in offices. However, 23% still found the process somewhat to very difficult, indicating that application procedures can be further simplified.

Table 4.2: Grading the Performance of Service Providers

Performance Grade	% of Users
Very Good (9-10)	15
Good (7-8)	38
Average (5-6)	24
Poor (1-4)	24
Total	**100**

Officials are generally courteous and helpful. Nearly 86% of respondents felt that officials they encountered were courteous or very courteous. Similarly, 83% perceived officials to be helpful or very helpful.

User Perceptions of Citizen's Charters

To investigate the perceptions of those who were familiar with the Citizen's Charter program, end-users were asked about what they thought of the charters they had seen or read before. Below are our findings.

Awareness of charters is extremely low. Almost 74% of users surveyed were unaware that Citizen's Charters exist. Of those that were aware of the Citizen's Charter program:

- 10% had simply heard of the Citizen's Charter program but had not actually seen or read a charter
- 7.7% had seen a charter in an office but had not read the document
- 7.4% had seen and read a charter
- 1% seen, read, and had a copy of a Citizen's Charter in hand

The lack of awareness of the Citizen's Charter initiative highlights the ineffectiveness of public service providers to inform citizens of the program. However, it must be noted that a significant proportion of end-users are poorly educated or illiterate, and thus would not be in a position to determine whether Citizen's Charters are implemented or not. This may account for the lack of awareness of the Citizen's Charter program among a large percentage of end-users. Yet, the burden still falls on government departments to build awareness of the Citizen's Charter program among end-users, regardless of their education or income. It is in this regard that most agencies have failed.

While users are satisfied with service quality standards in charters, most report that agencies do not deliver service as per those standards. About 88% of users that had read a Citizen's Charter were partially or completely satisfied with the service quality standards outlined in those charters. However, when asked if actual service delivery met the standards established in agency charters, just 40% responded that service indeed was delivered as per standards outlined in a Citizen's Charter. Almost 13% responded that service did not meet the standards outlined in a Citizen's Charter. While it is commendable that agencies have service quality

standards that most users are satisfied with, the same departments must do more to actually deliver service as per the standards they themselves have drafted.

Many offices do not display crucial components of Citizen's Charters. Investigators independently verified whether the main components of a charter (discussed in Chapter 3) were prominently displayed in offices they visited. One or more essential component of a Citizen's Charter was prominently displayed in 70% of the offices visited by investigators. Yet, most offices did not include some of the most crucial components of a Citizen's Charter in the charters that were displayed, such as service quality standards. Only 14% of the offices visited had displayed a charter that outlined that department's service quality standards. Fees and service charges were partially or fully included in charters in just 25% of the offices surveyed. 8% of offices had charters that outlined the procedures that users had to follow to apply for service. Lastly, just 26% of offices visited by investigators displayed a charter that fully outlined that department's grievance redress mechanism.

Users are not encouraged to provide feedback on charters. More than 84% of respondents that had seen a Citizen's Charter had not had the opportunity to provide feedback to department officials responsible for the implementation of the agency Citizen's Charter, indicating that end-users are rarely consulted when drafting, implementing, or updating charters.

Charters are considered easy to read. Nearly 76% of users that had

Box 4.1: An NGO Initiative to Popularize Citizen's Charters

A fine example of the role that civil society can play in increasing public awareness of Citizen Charters, comes from an initiative carried out by a network of NGOs led by the Catalyst Trust, a well-reputed NGO in Tamil Nadu, working in the areas of good governance and citizenship.

Under their auspices, 156 Citizen Centres have been set up all across Tamil Nadu covering all districts. These Citizen Centres provide information and guidance, facilitate discussion and discourses, encourage civic initiatives to monitor institutions of governance and explore solutions. They have brought out a book known as 'Thatti kekha Thagavalgal' (Information you can use to question / hold the service provider accountable), which is a compilation of Citizen's Charters of the departments of the Government of Tamil Nadu. It is quite likely that high public awareness about Citizen Charters observed in Tamil Nadu is partly the result of such networks, which have also aided the process of spreading awareness. Surveys have shown that this document of Citizen Charters was available in all the Citizen Centres and therefore would have been accessed by the citizens.

previously read a Citizen's Charter felt the document was easy to read and understand. 64% of users that had read a Citizen's Charter reported that the document was available in a regional language and 13% mentioned that users were charged for personal copies of charters.

Charters are usually prominently displayed. A majority of the 290 users familiar with the Citizen's Charter program had seen a charter at the office where they were interviewed. 60% of these respondents said that a charter was displayed at the main entrance while another 21% said that a charter was displayed in a reception hall or main office. 15% did not notice a charter that was prominently displayed. About 61% of users reported that names of key officials were posted somewhere in the office they had visited. Hard copies of charters were available in 47% of offices visited.

Many feel that the inclusion of a Citizen's Obligations section in a charter is helpful. Almost 40% of users surveyed reported that a section on Citizen's Obligations and Eligbility was included in the charters they had read. Of those that had seen a Citizen's Obligation section, 89% felt that the section was helpful to determine their eligibility for service.

Does the Display of Charters Have an Impact?

An important question is whether the physical display of Citizen's Charters in offices impacts service delivery. While the display of a Citizen's Charter need not imply superior service or better responsiveness, such a display can indicate that an agency not only

has a greater interest in responding to the needs of end-users, but also is more confident in what their charter promises. PAC researchers compared offices that displayed Citizen's Charters and offices that did not display a Citizen's Charter to determine if charters do indeed positively affect service. Below are our findings.

More users that were interviewed in offices that displayed Citizen's Charters were satisfied than users that were interviewed in offices that did not display Citizen's Charters. Almost 29% of users that were interviewed in offices that displayed Citizen's Charter were satisfied with that office's performance compared to 15% of users who were interviewed in offices that did not display a charter.

Offices that display Citizen's Charters deliver service closer to established standards than offices that do not display Citizen's Charters. More users (39%) who visited offices that displayed a Citizen's Charter perceived that those offices hewed closer to established service quality standards than users (21%) who visited offices that did not display a Citizen's Charter.

Offices that display Citizen's Charters are better prepared to facilitate service delivery and grievance redress. A much larger proportion of users (80%) interviewed in offices that displayed Citizen's Charters found the forms needed to apply for service or formal complaints than users who were interviewed in offices that did not display Citizen's Charters.

Although application forms are meant to be available to the public at office counters, many are forced

to obtain forms from an outside vendor. A much larger proportion of users (75%) who went to offices that did not display charters found it necessary to obtain forms from outside vendors than those who went to offices where charters are displayed (49%). Since the forms are easily available at these offices where charters are displayed, there is less scope for vendors to sell them outside and make money.

Many more of those who went to offices with charters displayed found the officials very courteous and helpful than those who went to offices without charters displayed. Nearly 25% and 22% of users who were interviewed in offices that displayed a Citizen's Charter felt that officials were courteous and helpful, respectively, compared to 16% and 22% of users who were interviewed in offices that did not display a charter. In addition, a larger proportion of those who lodged complaints among those who went to offices with charter displayed found the officials very helpful and considerate (29%) than those who went to offices with no charter displayed (14%).

Officials' Perceptions of Citizen's Charters

Officials, ranging from those at the cutting-edge to middle and senior level functionaries, were interviewed to gauge their familiarity with the concepts and themes behind the Citizen's Charter program. Below are our findings.

While familiar with certain charter components in isolation, most officials are unfamiliar with the overarching concept of Citizen's Charters. Investigators found that

officials, when first questioned, were generally unaware of cohesive documents known as Citizen's Charters. However, when investigators explained what constituted a Citizen's Charter, nearly 70% of officials claimed being aware of the internal provisions of their agency's charter, even if unaware of the Citizen's Charter program as a whole. Many officials who were aware of some of the internal components of their department's charter but were unaware of the Citizen's Charter program conflated departmental rules and regulations with provisions of their agency's charter. For example, some officials, when asked of their understanding of the Citizen's Charter program, pointed to office manuals that outlined job descriptions, thinking that those documents constituted a "charter". Despite this seeming lack of awareness of the Citizen's Charter program, almost 54% of the officials interviewed reported that they could recall the contents of their agency's charter. Clearly, departments must make a concerted effort to educate and train their staff on their Citizen's Charter implementation if this initiative is to be a success.

A majority are not trained in charter implementation. Nearly 64% of officials reported not being trained in the methods to implement Citizen's Charters even though many of these same officials are in charge of implementing charters in their department. However, most officials that were trained vouched for the usefulness of the training program.

A majority of officials interviewed consider the present systems to monitor charter implementation by senior staff to be adequate. As such, about 76% of officials claimed

that their agency's implementation of a Citizen's Charter was closely monitored by a senior official.

Service delivery does not appear to conform to established standards despite claims to the contrary by officials. Although nearly 89% of officials interviewed claimed that most to all services (see Table 4.3) in their department were delivered as per standards established in the department's charter, just 39% of users surveyed report the same. Curiously, even though most officials state that their department adheres to their service quality standards, just 38% of officials said that applications from end-users were processed on schedule 75% to 100% of the time, essentially indicating that most applications are not processed as per established standards. 94% of officials reported that standards established in their department's Citizen's Charter were practical and implementable. Government agencies must investigate why officials claim to deliver service as per established standards when evidence suggests otherwise.

Most officials claim to resolve grievances in a timely fashion while end-users beg to differ. Nearly 76% of officials interviewed claimed to acknowledge user complaints within the time period specified in their department's Citizen's Charter. Almost 43% of officials stated that their department resolves 75% to 100% of formal complaints within the time period specified by a Citizen's Charter. Yet, just 39% of end-users who filed a formal complaint report that officials promptly acknowledge and resolve grievances as per standards.

Views of officials on departmen-

Table 4.3: Standards of Service Delivery as Claimed by Officials

Service Delivered as per Standards	% of Officials
All Services	67
Most Services	22
Some Services	10
None	1

tal grievance redress mechanisms need to be investigated further. Officials were asked of the options users had to remedy a grievance. Nearly 79% of officials interviewed reported that end-users could file a formal complaint after encountering poor service. However, almost 46% reported that users were entitled to receive compensation after successfully filing a complaint. In reality, less than 4% of Citizen's Charters analyzed in the desk review indicated that users could be compensated for poor service. As such, officials must be further trained on how to approach and resolve user grievances.

Involvement of lower-level officials when implementing Citizen's Charters was limited. Only 37% of officials interviewed reported being fully involved while drafting their department's charter. Another 13% claimed to be partially involved in the process. Departments, while drafting their charters, must include all pertinent officials and lower-level functionaries in the process. Lower-level officials not only have a good understanding of customer needs, but also serve as the public "face" of the agency to

public, and thus their understanding and support of a charter is critical to its success.

Summary

- Most users are unaware of the Citizen's Charter program.
- A significant proportion of agencies that have enacted a Citizen's Charter provide average to poor service according to users.
- Citizen's Charters do have a positive impact on service delivery. For example, more users interviewed in agencies that do display a charter are satisfied with the overall performance of that agency compared to users who were interviewed in offices that did not display a charter.
- Officials lack awareness of the Citizen's Charter program. A majority of officials were not trained in methods to implement departmental Citizen's Charters, and most agencies did not include lower-level and cutting-edge officials when drafting the document. Worse, many officials conflate departmental rules and regulations with Citizen's Charters. Many also claim that their department delivers service as per established standards when end-users claim otherwise.
- Most users do not file formal complaints as many are simply unaware of their redress options. Officials also are not fully cognizant of the options end-users have to address grievances.
- Lastly, end-users are rarely encouraged to provide feedback on the Citizen's Charter program.

Perceptions by Sector & State

In order to compare the implementation of Citizen's Charters in government departments across various sectors, perceptions of users interviewed in the field survey outlined in Chapter 4 were analyzed by the sector in which a department that a user was interviewed in fell under. PAC researchers grouped government departments into the following sectors:

- Social Development
- Agriculture & Rural Development
- Infrastructure & Financial Services
- Environment
- Industry
- General Administration

As mentioned in Chapter 2, departments were grouped not by standard government classifications, but by how ordinary users would categorize a given department. Below are our findings.

Lower income users frequently interact with departments in the Agriculture & Rural Development, Social Development, and General Administration sectors. Nearly 77% of users of agencies in the Agriculture & Rural Development sector had an annual household income of less than Rs. 50,000. Similarly large proportions of users of agencies in the Social Development and General Administration sectors are low-income. Many of these low-income users are illiterate. These low-income users frequently visit offices of agencies in the Social Development or Agriculture & Rural Development sectors. For example, nearly 28% of users of agencies in the Agriculture

& Rural Development sector usually visit that office once a week. By contrast, users of agencies in the Environment or Infrastructure & Financial Services sectors, who are generally higher-income and literate, visit those offices infrequently, and are usually acting on the behalf of a business or organization. In essence, departments in the Social Development, Agriculture & Rural Development, and General Administration sectors have the greatest impact on lower-income users, and as such, their Citizen's Charters must be robust enough to address the needs of such low-income citizens.

Users across all sectors are generally unaware of Citizen's Charters. Awareness of the Citizen's Charter program ranges from a high of 20% among users of Infrastructure agencies to a low of 4% among users of Environmental agencies. 15% and 14% of users of Social Development and General Administration agencies, which primarily cater to the poor, are aware of the Citizen's Charter program. The fact that even 80% of the high-income, well-educated users of departments in the Infrastructure & Financial Services sector were unaware of the

Citizen's Charter program indicates that most agencies have not made the effort to educate end-users of their charters. As such, departments across all sectors must do more to build awareness among users of the Citizen's Charter program.

Most users that are aware of Citizen's Charters have favorable perceptions of the document. A majority of users from all sectors who were aware of the Citizen's Charter program felt that the charters they encountered were simple and easy to understand. About 86% of users of departments in the Environment and Infrastructure sectors felt that charter they had read were simple and easy to follow. Nearly 73% of users of departments in the Social Development sector shared that sentiment.

Most users of Social Development and General Administration agencies report that Citizen's Charters are displayed in offices. Nearly 87% of users of agencies in the Social Development sector reported that offices they visited had displayed a Citizen's Charter. Similarly, 83% of users of departments in the General Administra-

Table 5.1: Profile of Respondents by Sector

	Social Dev.	Agriculture & Rural Dev.	Infrastructure & Financial Services	Environment	Industry	General Admin.
Annual Income Less Than Rs.50,000 (%)	64.4	77.8	46.5	12.5	6.7	64.3
Illiterate (%)	13.2	13.6	3.1	4.2	0	14.4
Female (%)	33.1	14.9	12.7	4.2	6.7	15.6

Table 5.2: Frequency of Visits by Users by Sector

Frequency of Visits	Social Development	Agriculture & Rural Development	Infrastructure & Financial Services	Environment	Industry	General Administration
Once a week	9.9	27.8	9.4	0	6.7	8.8
Once in four weeks	23.9	15.3	14.6	0	0	8.2
Occasionally	54.5	51.4	71.1	87	80	75.9
Total	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**

tion sector report that offices had displayed a charter. However, users of Environmental agencies reported that offices they had visited generally did not display a Citizen's Charter, a curious fact given that charters drafted by agencies in the Environmental sector were ranked very highly in this report's desk review.

Few users report that agencies in the Social Development and General Administration sectors deliver service as per established standards. Just 32% of users visiting agencies in the Social Development sector report that those departments deliver service as per standards established in a Citizen's Charter. Similarly, 40% of users interviewed at an agency in the General Administration sector report that service was delivered as per standards. By contrast, 60% of users visiting an agency in the Industrial sector feel that service conformed to standards. As mentioned previously, agencies in the Social Development and General Administration sectors serve far more users

than agencies in any other sector investigated for this report.

Overall satisfaction among users varied significantly by sector. While 73% of users interviewed in the Industrial sector were completely satisfied with the overall performance of that agency, just 17% of users interviewed in an agency in the Social Development sector shared that sentiment. Investigators, in addition to asking users their overall satisfaction with a given agency, asked users to grade the performance of that agency on a scale of 1 to 10. As Table 5.3 indicates, just 8% of users interviewed in the Social Development sector graded the performance of that agency between 9 to 10, or "very good". By contrast, 60% of users interviewed in an agency in the Industry sector rated that agency "very good". While unfortunate that few users feel that departments in the social sector, which generally cater to the poor, provide above average service, over 39% of users interviewed in agencies in the Agriculture & Rural Development

sector, which cater to the poor and illiterate, reported that such departments provide "very good" service.

Usage of grievance redress mechanisms is low across all sectors. The sector with the greatest proportion of dissatisfied users filing formal complaints is the Infrastructure sector, where just 9% of users who had a grievance filed a complaint. No user interviewed in agencies in the Environment and Agriculture & Rural Development sectors filed a formal complaint. Quality of grievance redress varied significantly across sectors. While 80% of users of the Infrastructure agencies who did file a formal complaint were satisfied with the resolution of the grievance, just 31% of users of Social Development agencies shared that sentiment. Obvi-

ously, departments across all sectors must educate users of their grievance redress options while also improving the quality of grievance resolutions.

Officials in the Industry and Environment sectors are the most courteous. However, just 17% of users of agencies in the Social Development sector report that officials they encountered were "very courteous". Just 14% report that officials in the Social Development sector are "very helpful". However, the increased courtesy shown by officials in the Environmental or Industrial sector may be due to the nature of the clientele of those agencies. Users of agencies in the Environmental or Industrial sectors are usually businesspersons, and as such, are inherently afforded greater courtesy than users of agen-

Table 5.3: Grading of Service Providers by Users by Sector

Grade	Social Development (%)	Agriculture & Rural Development (%)	Infrastructure & Financial Services (%)	Environment (%)	Industry (%)	General Admin. (%)
Very Good (9-10)	8	39	15	26	60	16
Good (7-8)	38	37	43	30	27	38
Average (5-6)	24	13	23	26	13	23
Poor (1-4)	30.	11	19	18	0	23
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

Table 5.4: Awareness & Display of Citizen's Charters by State

	Aware of the Citizen's Charter Program (%)	Seen a Charter Displayed in an Office (%)
AP	23	90
Central	13	90
Chandigarh	19	100
Delhi	11	82
Haryana	10	33
Karnataka	27	79
Punjab	4	-
Rajasthan	32	71
Tamil Nadu	64	85

cies in the Social Development or Agriculture & Rural Development sectors, who are by and large poor and illiterate.

Few users across all sectors were asked for their feedback. Just 19% of users of departments in the Infrastructure sector reported being asked for their feedback on service delivery, followed by 12% of users of agencies in the Social Development sector, and 9% of users of agencies in the Environment sectors. No users of agencies in other sectors were asked for their feedback. Agencies across all sectors must make a concerted effort to not only ask for user feedback on service delivery, but also include users while formulating charters.

Analysis of User Perceptions by State

Similarly to how user perceptions were analyzed by sector, PAC researchers analyzed user perceptions by state. While researchers could not draw any conclusions about aggregate user satisfaction in a state, given the vast differences in demographics from state to state, researchers did analyze aggregate awareness of the Citizen's Charter program in the states reviewed for this report. Below are our findings.

Government agencies in some states, notably Tamil Nadu, have end-users who are more aware of the program than agencies in other states. Nearly 64% of end-users in Tamil Nadu were aware

Box 5.1: Are Citizen's Charters Really Targeting Ordinary Citizens?

After the ratification of the 73rd and 74th constitutional amendments, a large number of administrative functions have been devolved to local governments, from which a great number of ordinary citizen access basic public services. Given their impact, one would expect that such local bodies would be well represented among the Citizen's Charters compiled on the DARPG website. However, of the 711 Citizen's Charters listed on the site that were drafted by agencies in State or Union Territory governments, just 19 were drafted by local bodies - 11 were drafted by one agency - the Puducherry Administration.

It is indeed a paradox that so few local governing bodies have drafted a Citizen's Charter. In contrast, a great number of agencies in the Environmental and Industrial sectors have drafted Citizen's Charters. If the Citizen's Charter regime is to be a success, local institutions that serve great numbers of ordinary citizens must empower their users with relevant information through Citizen's Charters.

of the Citizen's Charter program. Of those end-users in Tamil Nadu aware of the Citizen's Charter program, almost 29% had actually read the document. It is no coincidence that awareness of the Citizen's Charter program is so great in Tamil Nadu, given the pioneering capacity building exercises conducted by the Catalyst Trust, an esteemed NGO working in the state. In general, awareness of the Citizen's Charter program was higher in Southern states than in other regions. As such, other states should follow the Tamil Nadu model and leverage civil society organizations to increase awareness of the Citizen's Charter program among end-users.

Most end-users across states who are aware of the Citizen's Charter program report that charters are prominently displayed in offices. However, while nearly 85% of end-users from Tamil Nadu who were aware of the Citizen's Charter program saw the document displayed in a government office, just 33% of users in Haryana reported the same. Table 5.4 outlines the proportion of users that had seen a Citizen's Charter in a government office by state.

Summary

- A majority of users of agencies in the Social Development, Agriculture & Rural Development, and General Administration are low-income and poorly educated. By contrast, users of agencies in the Environmental and Industrial sectors are generally businesspersons and are highly educated. As such, charters drafted by agencies in the Social Development, Agricultural & Rural Development, and General Administration sectors must be robust enough to meet the needs of the poor

and illiterate.

- Few users across all sectors are aware of the Citizen's Charter program. Even the highly educated users of agencies in the Environmental and Industrial sectors are unaware of the Citizen's Charter program. While many agencies primarily cater to poor and illiterate users, departments across all sectors must do more to educate citizens on their charters.
- While user satisfaction varied significantly across all sectors, most users who were aware of the Citizen's Charter program felt that agencies were not delivering service as per established standards.
- Few users across all sectors file formal complaints when encountering a problem.
- End-users are rarely consulted when formulating charters. In addition, a negligible number of users were asked for their feedback on the Citizen's Charter program.
- End-users in Tamil Nadu were the most aware of the Citizen's Charter program.

Conclusions

Chapter 6

Conceived as an instrument to press public service providers to become more open and accountable, the Citizen's Charter program was launched in India by the Prime Minister in 1997. Inspired by its success in the United Kingdom, this far-reaching initiative strives to empower end-users with information allowing them to demand quality service. Over 767 public service providers in the Central and State governments implemented a Citizen's Charter in the following years. Yet, the question remained as to the efficacy of Citizen's Charters in practice.

To answer this question, the Public Affairs Centre, Bangalore, has conducted a large-scale national review of the Citizen's Charter program. A first of its kind, this report benchmarked hundreds of Citizen's Charters from across India. Ordinary citizens and officials were also interviewed to gauge if Citizen's Charters have indeed made public service delivery a more transparent and effective process.

Unfortunately, the Citizen's Charter program has not met its promise. Most government agencies seem to have viewed implementing a Citizen's Charter simply as an exercise in drafting a short document rather than an opportunity to fundamentally institute systemic changes to improve service delivery quality and increase accountability. As such, most Citizen's Charters reviewed for this report have not been designed

well, and agencies that have implemented a Citizen's Charter do not seem to have improved their service delivery quality nor increased avenues to accountability. Below are our conclusions.

Distribution by State & Sector

Government agencies in some states, notably Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu, provide better access to Citizen's Charters and often have end-users who are more aware of the program than agencies in other states. Similarly, agencies in certain sectors, such as the Environmental and Industrial sectors, which generally target highly educated businesspeople, have drafted Citizen's Charters of much better quality than agencies in other sectors, such as the Social Development and Agricultural & Rural Development sectors, which generally target the poor and uneducated. In essence, the most poorly drafted Citizen's Charters are those implemented by agencies, such as those in the Social Development sector, whose users could most benefit from critical information in a charter, while the most effective charters are drafted by agencies whose users need the information in a charter the least.

- Of the 554 Citizen's Charters reviewed by PAC researchers, nearly 17% were drafted by agencies in Andhra Pradesh and 15% were drafted by agencies in Tamil Nadu. Union Territories like Puducherry and Goa, in addition to the NCT, were also well represented. Economic powerhouses Maharashtra and Karnataka were represented by just nine and eight charters respectively.

- Over 64% of end-users surveyed in Tamil Nadu were aware of the Citizen's Charter, the highest awareness among states studied for this report.
- When evaluated for the quality of their contents on a 100 point scale, Citizen's Charters drafted by agencies in the Environmental received an average score of 54.5. Charters drafted by agencies in the Social Development and Agricultural & Rural Development received an average score of 41.1 and 42.7 respectively.

Access & Accountability

While commendable that a large number of public service providers have implemented a Citizen's Charter, very few end-users and officials are aware of the Citizen's Charter program. Furthermore, access to Citizen's Charters is very limited. Most government agencies that have drafted a Citizen's Charter do not prominently display critical components of the document, such as service delivery standards, in offices. The net result is that end-users often lack the knowledge to apply for services or redress their grievances.

- Nearly 74% of end-users surveyed for this report were unaware of the Citizen's Charter program. Just 8% had actually seen and read a Citizen's Charter.
- Only 36% of dissatisfied end-users filed a formal complaint. Of those who did not file a formal complaint, almost 68% would have liked to file a complaint but did not do so because they lacked knowledge of grievance redress procedures. Just 39% of users that filed a formal com-

plaint reported that grievances were resolved as per standards.

- Most officials polled for this report, when first interviewed by researchers, were not aware of the Citizen's Charter program as a whole. However, when researchers explained what constituted a Citizen's Charter, nearly 70% of officials reported being aware of some internal components of their agency's charter, such as service delivery standards.
- There is no comprehensive listing of all Citizen's Charters drafted by various government departments or agencies. The DARPG website only lists 767 Citizen's Charters.

Design & Content

Most Citizen's Charters drafted by government agencies are not designed well. Critical information that end-users need to hold agencies accountable are simply missing from a large number of charters. Thus, the Citizen's Charter program has not succeeded in appreciably empowering end-users to push for public accountability.

- When evaluated against standards developed by the Department of Administrative Reforms & Public Grievances (DARPG), the ministry spearheading the Citizen's Charter program, just 27% of the 561 charters reviewed for this report had eight or more of the ten essential components every Citizen's Charter is expected to have, such as service quality standards or names and addresses of key officials. Many Citizen's Charters reviewed for this report were merely copied from sample templates.

- When evaluated for the quality of their content, no charter was graded as "Very Good". In fact, nearly 69% of charters reviewed for this report were merely "Average" to "Poor".
- Less than 28% of the charters reviewed summarized the procedures end-users have to follow to access services.
- Only 56% of the charters reviewed clearly outlined departmental service delivery standards and nearly 54% delineated an agency's grievance redress mechanism.
- Nearly 42% of charters reviewed provided contact information for key officials, such as names, telephone numbers or email addresses.
- Just 6% of charters ensured equitable access to the disabled and elderly, underscoring the lack of foresight of most agencies into the needs of end-users.

Implementation

There is little evidence that government agencies assessed the feasibility of implementing a Citizen's Charter before drafting the document. Given that end-users and lower-level officials were rarely consulted before drafting a charter, it appears that most agencies viewed drafting a Citizen's Charter as a one-time commitment rather than an opportunity to institute fundamental systemic changes to service delivery. After implementation, Citizen's Charters rarely seem to be updated.

- Only 37% of officials surveyed reported being fully involved while drafting and implementing their agency's Citizen's Charter. Anecdotal evidence

suggests that most departments did not consult end-users or civil society organizations to understand their needs when drafting their Citizen's Charter.

- Over 64% of officials surveyed were not trained in methods to implement Citizen's Charters.
- Very few charters reviewed for this report showed any signs of being updated since implementation nearly a decade ago. In fact, just 6% of charters made provision to update the document some time after implementation.

Improvements to Service Quality

Although the Citizen's Charter initiative is an important step towards public sector reform, Citizen's Charters have not significantly contributed to increases in service quality in most cases. Most agencies do not deliver service as per standards outlined in their own Citizen's Charter. Yet, government agencies that have made a concerted effort to build awareness of their Citizen's Charter not only have more satisfied users, but also are more likely to deliver service as per established standards.

- When asked to evaluate the quality of the service delivery process by government agencies that have implemented a Citizen's Charter, less than 15% of end-users felt that the service delivery process was "Very Good". Another 48% considered the service delivery process to be "Poor" or "Average".
- Among users who were aware of the Citizen's Charter program, less than 40% reported that agencies delivered service

as per standards established in a charter. However, almost 89% of officials surveyed reported that their agency delivers service as per established standards, underscoring the poor awareness and training officials have of their agency's Citizen's Charter.

- Less than 27% of end-users of a government agency that had implemented a Citizen's Charter were able to complete their application for a document or service in one visit to an office. Nearly 42% had to visit an office three times or more before their application was processed.
- An important question is whether the physical display of Citizen's Charters in government offices impacts the quality of service delivery. Such a display can indicate that an agency not only has a greater interest in responding to the needs of end-users, but also is more confident in what their charter promises. PAC researchers compared offices that displayed Citizen's Charter and offices that did not to determine if charters do indeed positively affect service. Almost 39% of users of agencies that had prominently displayed a Citizen's Charter in their offices reported that those offices delivered service as per established quality standards compared to 21% of users of agencies that had not displayed a Citizen's Charter in their office. As a result, 29% of users of agencies that had displayed a charter were satisfied with the overall performance of that agency compared to 15% of users of agencies that had not displayed a charter.

Policy Implications

Chapter 7

At first sight, the Citizen's Charter initiative appears to be a relatively simple task. It entails nothing more than the design and adoption of a slim document that is meant to assist citizens in their interactions with public agencies. Yet, as the preceding chapters have shown, there is a complex set of factors underlying this seemingly simple task. The complexity can be traced to three sources.

First, an agency that is motivated to adopt a Citizen's Charter may lack the capability and resources to see it through. But lack of timely support may stand in the way of effective adoption.

Second, a Citizen's Charter calls for the institutionalization of new practices and increased transparency in the agency that adopts it. This is not a mere technical matter, but one that requires that agency leaders and their staff work together towards this goal. Leaders who are not committed to this cause are unlikely to purse it except in a nominal fashion.

Third, the new practices demand significant changes in the behaviour and attitudes of the agency and its staff towards citizens. When organizational and personal incentives clash with the desired changes, then again, progress becomes difficult. That the reform is piloted by a central nodal agency that does not have direct control over these crucial variables further complicates matters. It is against the backdrop of this scenario that we present be-

low a set of policy implications.

Lessons Learned

It is important to learn from the shortcomings of the Citizen's Charter program so that renewed efforts can be made to improve and institutionalize this much needed accountability mechanism. Citizen's Charters are unlikely to be effective when certain prerequisites are not in place. For this program to succeed, government agencies must ascertain services that must be delivered, consult with end-users to research their needs, determine service delivery standards that can be realistically implemented, scope any potential organizational restructuring, and train and motivate staff.

An Impetus From Within is Needed

The findings of the study raise fundamental questions of the strategies adopted by the Government of India to promote Citizen's Charters. Will Citizen's Charters make an impact in the absence of a movement within the government to raise levels of service quality and accountability? A strong movement that motivates and equips both government leaders and staff to design and deliver services effectively will prepare the ground to introduce formal Citizen's Charters. Thus, charters will come at the end of a sequence of steps, and not at the beginning, when the building blocks for service delivery improvements are not yet in place. To be effective, the Citizen's Charter initiative should operate in a "mission mode", starting with the specification of desired outcomes and a strategy to achieve them. It is the best way to build incentives for agencies to make a success of this reform.

Rethink Prerequisites for Success

This huge challenge is rendered even more complex as the capabilities and resources governments and departments need to implement Citizen's Charters vary significantly. The highly uneven distribution of Citizen's Charters across states is clear evidence of this ground reality. Whether Citizen's Charters should be adopted at one go all over the country is a matter that calls for some reflection. Is it better to proceed in a phased manner when all the pre-conditions necessary for successful implementation can-not be met? For example, some agencies may need more time to specify and agree upon realistic standards of service. In others, additional effort will be required to motivate and equip the staff to participate in this reform exercise. Such organizations may be given time and resources to experiment with standards, grievance redress mechanisms or training. They may also need more time for internal restructuring of the service delivery chain or introducing new systems. In such cases, formal Citizen's Charters may be adopted and publicized only after these prerequisites are fully in place.

Build Expertise With External Assistance

An important implication of these suggestions is that the design of Citizen's Charters and the strategies adopted to launch them need attention. It also appears that additional assistance to agencies

implementing a charter may be required. Such assistance is required because existing officials may be busy with their normal duties, and may not even have the skills to undertake this exercise on their own. Experts or specialists may have to be brought in to assist the agencies to design and implement Citizen's Charters in a professional manner. Consultations with staff and citizen groups need to be organized systematically and the resulting inputs properly internalized. While this sequence of steps may call for additional time and money, they may be worth the investment.

Strengthen Charter Design

The uneven quality of Citizen's Charters reviewed for this report signals the absence of an internal oversight mechanism that ensures conformity to established design guidelines. The fact that both central and state governments are involved complicates matters further. It is not implied here that a central oversight body should approve or stamp every charter, but there is a clear case for a more effective, decentralized vetting process, through either regional bodies or expert groups, that supports and clears Citizen's Charters that are released publicly.

Benchmark Using End-User Feedback

Systematic monitoring and review of Citizen's Charters is necessary even after they are approved and placed in the public domain. Performance and accountability tend to suffer when officials are not held responsible for the quality of a charter's design and implementation. In this context, end-user feedback can be a timely aid to assess the progress and outcomes of an agency that has implemented a Citizen's Charter. This is standard practice for charters implemented in the UK. Reporting and debating such findings annually in the legislature or Parliament can be yet another way to signal to agencies and their staff that Citizen's Charters and responsiveness to citizens do indeed matter.

Hold Top Level Officials Accountable For Success

All of the above point to the need to make the heads of agencies or other designated senior officials accountable for their respective Citizen's Charter, much like what has now been done with respect to the Right to Information Act. It was shocking in the course of the present study to see how officials could simply refuse to share any information on their Citizen's Charters. That websites and offices did not offer relevant information on Citizen's Charter reinforces the wide prevalence of this tendency in an area of reform whose very rationale is information disclosure. Holding public agencies accountable for the delivery of services according to agreed upon standards, and empowering ordinary citizens to demand their entitlements will both remain a mere dream if we fail to follow up on the policy implications discussed above.

Include Civil Society in the Process

Governments need to recognize and support the efforts of civil society groups in solving the problem of information disclosure. Even when officials are unable or

unwilling to disseminate information on charters, there is nothing to prevent civil society activists and the media from educating people about Citizen's Charters. A case in point is Tamil Nadu, where public awareness about charters seems to be the highest. It is perhaps no accident that, in this state, citizen groups have been quite active in informing ordinary people about charters and how they can use their provisions.

In Sum

The Citizen's Charter program was launched several years ahead of the Right to Information (RTI) Act. It is indeed a paradox that, despite the presence of Citizen's Charters, citizens now use RTI, pay a fee, and wait for 30 days to seek information in order to solve their problems with public service providers! It is to prevent this eventuality that Citizen's Charters were thought of in the first place. Perhaps if Citizen's Charters were designed and implemented well, a substantial proportion of those who have resorted to using RTI might have avoided these costs and also reduced the burden on the bureaucracy in the process. Indeed, we now have the worst of both worlds. We have Citizen's Charters that agencies cannot fully implement, and citizens who, as a result, incur additional costs by trying to sort out their public service problems through the expensive RTI route. The case for putting in place a more robust Citizen's Charter program needs no further argument.

Appendix

Table A.1: Citizen's Charters Obtained & Reviewed For This Report By Region & State

Region	States	# of Charters Obtained	# of Charters Reviewed
South	Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu	199	195
Western	Goa, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Rajasthan	84	84
Northern	Delhi, Chattisgarh, HP,Madhya Pradesh,Uttar Pradesh, J&K, Uttaranchal	84	83
Eastern	Bihar, Orissa, West Bengal	5	5
North-Eastern	Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizorum, Nagaland, Sikkim, Tripura	9	9
Union Territories	Andaman & Nicobar, Chandigarh, Dadra, Daman & Diu, Lakshadweep, Puducherry	67	67
Central Ministries and Agencies		114	61
Central Commercial Organizations		50	50
Total		**561**	**554**

Table A.2: Citizen's Charters Selected For the Desk Review By Sector

Sector	# of Charters Reviewed	# of Charters That Scored 6 or Above	# of Charters Selected for the Desk Review
Social Development	152	99	49
Agriculture & Rural Development	47	32	28
Infrastructure & Financial Services	154	101	54
Environment	24	13	8
General Administration	81	51	30
Industry	96	60	31
Total	**554**	**356**	**200**

Table A.3: Citizen's Charters Selected for the Desk Review by Region & Sector

Sector	South	West	North	East	North East	Union Territories	Central	Total
Social Development	11	12	11	2	1	5	10	52
Agriculture & Rural Development	11	5	7	0	0	3	6	32
Infrastructure & Financial Services	12	8	9	2	1	3	15	50
Environment	2	2	1	0	1	1	1	8
Industry	5	4	5	0	1	1	14	30
General Administration	4	7	7	0	4	3	3	28
Total	**45**	**40**	**40**	**4**	**8**	**16**	**50**	**200**

Table A.4: All Citizen's Charters Selected for the Desk Review

#	Charter Detail	Centre / State	Sector	Grade
	Good Charters (Scores Above 50)			
1	**Ministry of Food Processing**	Central	Social Development	73.00
2	**Department of Industries**	Delhi	Industry	71.00
3	**Transport Department**	Karnataka	Infrastructure & Finance	71.00
4	**Transport Department**	TN	Infrastructure & Finance	71.00
5	**Department of Cooperation**	AP	Agriculture & Rural Development	71.00
6	**Labour Department**	Karnataka	Social Development	71.00
7	**AP Womens' Cooperative Finance Corporation**	AP	Infrastructure & Finance	69.00
8	**Animal Husbandry Department**	Goa	Agriculture & Rural Development	69.00
9	**Karnataka State Pollution Control Board**	Karnataka	Environment	68.00
10	**Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion**	Central	Industry	68.00
11	**Power Finance Corporation Limited**	Central	Infrastructure & Finance	68.00
12	**Department of Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution**	Central	Social Development	68.00
13	**The Directorate of Settlement & Land Records**	Goa	Infrastructure & Finance	67.00
14	**Commisionerate of Sales Tax**	Goa	Infrastructure & Finance	66.00
15	**Civil Supplies**	Puducherry	Social Development	66.00
16	**Dibrugarh Commissioner**	Assam	General Administration	65.00
17	**Chandigarh Pollution Control Committee**	Chandigarh	Environment	65.00
18	**Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports**	Central	Social Development	65.00
19	**Delhi Police**	Delhi	General Administration	63.00
20	**Maharashtra Police**	Maharashtra	General Administration	63.00
21	**New Delhi Municipal Council**	Delhi	General Administration	62.00
22	**Goa Police**	Goa	General Administration	62.00

#	Charter Detail	Centre / State	Sector	Grade
23	State Bank of India	Central	Infrastructure & Finance	62.00
24	State Excise Department	Goa	Infrastructure & Finance	62.00
25	Targeted Public Distribution System (TDPS)	Orissa	Social Development	62.00
26	Labour Department	Puducherry	Social Development	62.00
27	Department of Industries	AP	Industry	61.00
28	Delhi State Industrial Development Corporation Limited'	Delhi	Industry	61.00
29	Punjab National Bank	Central	Infrastructure & Finance	60.00
30	Development Department	Delhi	Agriculture & Rural Development	60.00
31	Drugs Control Department	Delhi	Social Development	60.00
32	Chief Electoral Officer	Daman	General Administration	59.00
33	Bihar Transport Department	Bihar	Infrastructure & Finance	59.00
34	Electricity Department	Lakshadweep	Infrastructure & Finance	59.00
35	All India Institute of Medical Science	Central	Social Development	58.00
36	Directorate of Fisheries	Goa	Industry	57.00
37	Rural Development Department	Goa	Agriculture & Rural Development	57.00
38	District Registrar	Goa	General Administration	56.00
39	Office of the Development Commissioner (Small Scale Industries)	Central	Industry	56.00
40	Central Electricity Authority	Central	Infrastructure & Finance	56.00
41	Forest Department	Goa	Environment	55.00
42	Ministry of Company Affairs	Central	Industry	55.00
43	Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances	Central	General Administration	54.00
44	Inspectorate of Factories	TN	Industry	54.00
45	Transport Department	Puducherry	Infrastructure & Finance	54.00
46	Revenue Department	TN	Infrastructure & Finance	54.00

#	Charter Detail	Centre / State	Sector	Grade
47	Govt General Hospital, Chennai	TN	Social Development	54.00
48	AP Fire Services Department	AP	General Administration	53.00
49	Forest Department	AP	Environment	53.00
50	Ministry of Textiles	Central	Industry	53.00
51	Goa Handicrafts, Rural & Small Scale Industrial Development Coop	Goa	Industry	53.00
52	Fisheries Department	Puducherry	Industry	53.00
53	Department of Posts	Central	Infrastructure & Finance	53.00
54	Panchayati Raj & Rural Development Commissionerate	AP	Agriculture & Rural Development	53.00
55	Directorate of Civil Supplies and Price Control	Goa	Social Development	53.00
56	Registrar Cooperative Societies	Delhi	Agriculture & Rural Development	52.00
57	TN Cooperative Milk Producers Federation Ltd	TN	Agriculture & Rural Development	52.00
58	Ministry of Environment and Forests	Central	Environment	51.00
59	Forest Department	Haryana	Environment	51.00
60	Urban Development	Delhi	Infrastructure & Finance	51.00
61	Horticulture Department	AP	Agriculture & Rural Development	51.00
62	Directorate of Agricultural Marketing	Delhi	Agriculture & Rural Development	51.00
63	Department of Food and Civil Supplies	Haryana	Social Development	51.00
64	Civil Supplies Department	Karnataka	Social Development	51.00
Average Charters (Scores Above 25)				
65	Directorate of Foreign Trade	Central	Industry	50.00
66	Roads and Buildings Department	AP	Infrastructure & Finance	50.00
67	Ministry of Road Transport & Highways	Central	Infrastructure & Finance	50.00
68	Public Works Department	Goa	Infrastructure & Finance	50.00
69	Public Works Department	Puducherry	Infrastructure & Finance	50.00

#	Charter Detail	Centre / State	Sector	Grade
70	Department of Prevention of Food Adulteration	Delhi	Social Development	50.00
71	Registration of Births and Deaths (Directorate of Eco & Stats)	Delhi	General Administration	49.00
72	Indian Institute of Mass Communication	Central	Infrastructure & Finance	49.00
73	Directorate of Agriculture	Andaman & Nicobar	Agriculture & Rural Development	49.00
74	Health Department	Chandigarh	Social Development	49.00
75	Anti-Corruption Bureau	AP	General Administration	48.00
76	Registrar of Companies	J & K	General Administration	48.00
77	Bhakra Beas Management Board	Central	Infrastructure & Finance	48.00
78	Customs Commissionerate	Centre/Gujarat	Infrastructure & Finance	48.00
79	Adi Dravidar Welfare Department	Pondichery	Social Development	48.00
80	Birth & Death Registration	Sikkim	General Administration	47.00
81	Soil and Water Conservation	Megalaya	Environment	47.00
82	Sugar Department	AP	Industry	47.00
83	Andhra Pradesh Pollution Control Board	AP	Environment	46.00
84	Weavers Service Centre, Guwahati	Assam	Industry	46.00
85	Ministry of Commerce	Central	Industry	46.00
86	Indian Railways	Central	Infrastructure & Finance	46.00
87	Rural Electrification Corporation	Central	Infrastructure & Finance	46.00
88	Haryana State Cooperative Supply & Marketing Federation Limited	Haryana	Agriculture & Rural Development	46.00
89	Government Ayurveda College Hospital Tiruvananthpuram	Kerala	Social Development	46.00
90	Karnataka Police	Karnataka	General Administration	45.00
91	Industries	Haryana	Industry	45.00
92	Agriculture Related Service-Dairy Dev Department	Punjab	Agriculture & Rural Development	45.00
93	Department of Food and Civil Supplies, Ministry of Food & Consumer Affairs	Central	Social Development	45.00

#	Charter Detail	Centre / State	Sector	Grade
94	Food and Civil Supplies Department	Orissa	Social Development	45.00
95	Commissioner of Police	AP	General Administration	44.00
96	Law Department	Kerala	General Administration	44.00
97	Industries Department	Andaman & Nicobar	Industry	44.00
98	Exchange Facilities	Central	Infrastructure & Finance	44.00
99	Social Development Welfare Department	AP	Social Development	44.00
100	Delhi Transport Corporation	Delhi	Infrastructure & Finance	43.00
101	Electricity Department	Goa	Infrastructure & Finance	43.00
102	Department of Sales Tax	Maharastra	Infrastructure & Finance	43.00
103	Department of Housing and Urban Development	TN	Infrastructure & Finance	43.00
104	District Agriculture & Rural Development Dev Agency	Puducherry	Agriculture & Rural Development	43.00
105	Department of Training and Technical Education	Delhi	Social Development	43.00
106	Chandigarh Police	Chandigarh	General Administration	42.00
107	Puducherry Municipality	Puducherry	General Administration	42.00
108	AP Khadi and Village Industries Board	AP	Industry	42.00
109	Electricity Department	Andaman & Nicobar	Infrastructure & Finance	42.00
110	Transport Department	Goa	Infrastructure & Finance	42.00
111	Council for Advancement of People's Action and Rural Technology (CAPART)	Central	Agriculture & Rural Development	42.00
112	Department of Agriculture & Co-operation	Central	Agriculture & Rural Development	42.00
113	Ayush	Central	Social Development	42.00
114	Drugs Control Department	Kerala	Social Development	42.00
115	State Vigilance	J & K	General Administration	41.00
116	Export Credit Guarantee Corp. of India	Central	Industry	41.00
117	Department of Telecommunication	Central	Infrastructure & Finance	41.00

#	Charter Detail	Centre / State	Sector	Grade
118	Tamil Nadu Slum Clearance Board	TN	Infrastructure & Finance	41.00
119	Animal Husbandry and Vet Services	Andaman & Nicobar	Agriculture & Rural Development	41.00
120	Electricity Department	Pondichery	Infrastructure & Finance	40.00
121	Commercial Taxes Department	TN	Infrastructure & Finance	40.00
122	Home Ministry-Freedom Fighters	Central	Social Development	40.00
123	Education	Puducherry	Social Development	40.00
124	Chief Electoral Officer	Dadra & Nagarhaveli	General Administration	39.00
125	Development Commissioner for Handlooms	Central	Industry	39.00
126	Tourism Department	Goa	Industry	39.00
127	Andhra Bank	Central	Infrastructure & Finance	39.00
128	Central Board of Excise and Customs	Central	Infrastructure & Finance	39.00
129	Department of Agriculture	AP	Agriculture & Rural Development	39.00
130	Gobind Ballabh Pant Hospital	Delhi	Social Development	39.00
131	Employment and Training	Gujarat	Social Development	39.00
132	Ministry of Statistics and Programme implementation	Central	General Administration	38.00
133	Legislative Department	Haryana	General Administration	38.00
134	Small Savings and State Lotteries Department	AP	Infrastructure & Finance	38.00
135	Andhra Pradesh State Irrigation Development Corporation	AP	Agriculture & Rural Development	37.00
136	Animal Husbandry Department	Pondichery	Agriculture & Rural Development	37.00
137	Griha Kalyan Kendra	Central	Social Development	37.00
138	Directorate of Food and Drug Administration	Goa	Social Development	37.00
139	Fire and Emergency Services	Goa	General Administration	36.00
140	Goa University	Goa	Social Development	36.00
141	Employment And Self Employment Department	Maharashtra	Social Development	36.00

#	Charter Detail	Centre / State	Sector	Grade
142	Rural Development	TN	Agriculture & Rural Development	35.00
143	Employment Exchange	Andaman & Nicobar	Social Development	35.00
144	Department of Employment & Training	AP	Social Development	35.00
145	Civil Supplies Department	Kerala	Social Development	35.00
146	Department of Defence R & D	Central	General Administration	34.00
147	Fisheries Department	Andaman & Nicobar	Industry	34.00
148	Jute Manufacturers' Development Council	Central	Industry	34.00
149	Khadi and Village Industries Board	Haryana	Industry	34.00
150	Excise Department	Kerala	Infrastructure & Finance	34.00
151	State Transport Department	Kerala	Infrastructure & Finance	34.00
152	Ministry of Agro & Rural Industries	Central	Agriculture & Rural Development	34.00
153	Food & Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs Department	HP	Social Development	34.00
154	Directorate of Sainik Welfare	Kerala	Social Development	34.00
155	Department of Medical and Health Services	Laksha	Social Development	34.00
156	General Insurance Corporation of India	Central	Infrastructure & Finance	33.00
157	Panchayati Raj Institutions	AP	Agriculture & Rural Development	33.00
158	Delhi Development Authority	Central	Infrastructure & Finance	33.00
159	Directorate of Town Panchayats	TN	Agriculture & Rural Development	33.00
160	Chief Electoral Officer	Arunachal pradesh	General Administration	32.00
161	Faridkot District	Punjab	General Administration	32.00
162	Coir Board	Central	Industry	32.00
163	Tamil Nadu Industrial Investment Corporation Ltd	TN	Industry	32.00
164	Directorate of Shipping Services	Andaman	Infrastructure & Finance	32.00
165	Transport	Manipur	Infrastructure & Finance	32.00

#	Charter Detail	Centre / State	Sector	Grade
166	Department of Women Development and Child Welfare	AP	Social Development	32.00
167	Ayurveda College for Women and Children	Kerala	Social Development	32.00
168	Ministry of Information and Broadcasting	Central	Infrastructure & Finance	31.00
169	Department of Fertilizers	Central	Agriculture & Rural Development	31.00
170	Chief Electoral Officer	Goa	General Administration	30.00
171	Credit Control Department.	Haryana	Infrastructure & Finance	30.00
172	Pensions and Other Retirement Benefits	TN	Infrastructure & Finance	30.00
173	UP Power Corporation	UP	Infrastructure & Finance	30.00
174	Horticulture	Haryana	Agriculture & Rural Development	30.00
175	OBC Commission	Delhi	Social Development	29.00
176	Police Department	Megalaya	General Administration	28.00
177	Ministry of Coal	Central	Industry	28.00
178	Haryana State Legal Services Authority	Haryana	General Administration	27.00
179	Cotton Corporation Of India	Central	Industry	27.00
180	Ministry of Steel	Central	Industry	27.00
181	Bank of India	Central	Infrastructure & Finance	26.00
182	PWD Water Resources Organization	TN	Agriculture & Rural Development	26.00
183	Directorate of Public Health and Preventive Medicine	TN	Social Development	26.00
Unsatisfactory Charters (Scores Below 25)				
184	Delhi Tourism Development Corporation	Delhi	Industry	25.00
185	Chit Fund	Delhi	Infrastructure & Finance	25.00
186	Directorate Of Health Services	Goa	Social Development	25.00
187	Khadi and Village Industries Commission	Central	Industry	24.00
188	Health Services	Andaman	Social Development	24.00

#	Charter Detail	Centre / State	Sector	Grade
189	University of Madras	TN	Social Development	24.00
190	Haryana Urban Development Authority	Haryana	Infrastructure & Finance	23.00
191	Public Work Department	Delhi	Infrastructure & Finance	21.00
192	Animal Husbandry Department	Punjab	Agriculture & Rural Development	21.00
193	Delhi Minorities Commission	Delhi	Social Development	19.00
194	State Water Transport Department	Kerala	Infrastructure & Finance	17.00
195	Tourism Department	Kerala	Industry	15.00
196	Health and Family Welfare	Nagaland	Social Development	15.00
197	Social Welfare and Nutritious Meal Programme	TN	Social Development	12.00
198	Scheduled Tribes Development Department	Kerala	Social Development	11.00
199	Higher Education Department	Haryana	Social Development	9.00
200	Police Department	Kerala	General Administration	3.00

Table A.5: Citizen's Charters Selected for the Field Survey

#	State	Sector	Charter Name
1	AP	Social Development	Andhra Pradesh Women's Cooperative Finance Corporation
2	AP	Social Development	Civil Supplies Department
3	AP	Infrastructure & Finance	Central Power Distribution Company
4	AP	Social Development	Employment and Training Department
5	AP	Social Development	Hyderabad Metro Water Supply and Sewerage Board
6	AP	General Administration	Police Station, Malakpet
7	AP	Infrastructure & Finance	Regional Transport Office
8	AP	Social Development	Social Welfare Department
9	Central	Social Development	All India Institute of Medical Science
10	Central	Infrastructure & Finance	Air India
11	Central	Social Development	Central Government Health Scheme
12	Central	Infrastructure & Finance	Delhi Development Authority
13	Central	Infrastructure & Finance	Department of Post
14	Central	Infrastructure & Finance	Directorate of Estate
15	Central	Infrastructure & Finance	General Insurance Corporation Of India
16	Central	Social Development	Grih Kalyan Kendra
17	Central	Infrastructure & Finance	Indian Airlines
18	Central	Infrastructure & Finance	Mahanagar Telephone Nigam Limited
19	Central	Infrastructure & Finance	Oriental Insurance Company
20	Central	Infrastructure & Finance	Punjab National Bank
21	Central	Infrastructure & Finance	Post Office
22	Central	Infrastructure & Finance	Indian Railways
23	Central	Infrastructure & Finance	State Bank of India

#	State	Sector	Charter Name
24	Central	Infrastructure & Finance	Union Bank of India
25	Chandigarh	Social Development	Education Department
26	Chandigarh	Social Development	General Hospital
27	Chandigarh	Infrastructure & Finance	Housing Board
28	Chandigarh	General Administration	Police Station
29	Chandigarh	Environment	Pollution Control Board
30	Chandigarh	Infrastructure & Finance	Regional Transport Organisation
31	Delhi	General Administration	Delhi Police
32	Delhi	Industry	Department of Industries
33	Delhi	Social Development	Department of Prevention of Food Adulteration
34	Delhi	Social Development	Department of Training and Technical Education
35	Delhi	Social Development	Food and Supplies Organisation
36	Delhi	Social Development	G B Pant Hospital
37	Delhi	Social Development	Department of Health Services
38	Delhi	General Administration	Municipal Council
39	Delhi	General Administration	Registrar of Birth and Death
40	Delhi	Agriculture & Rural Development	Registrar Cooperative Societies
41	Delhi	Social Development	Social Welfare Department
42	Delhi	Infrastructure & Finance	Transport Department
43	Haryana	Social Development	Department of Food and Civil Supplies
44	Haryana	Infrastructure & Finance	Haryana Urban Development Authority
45	Haryana	Agriculture & Rural Development	Khadi and Village Industries Board
46	Haryana	General Administration	Municipal Council, Kalka
47	Haryana	General Administration	Municipal Council, Panhquila

#	State	Sector	Charter Name
48	Haryana	Social Development	Social Welfare Department
49	Karnataka	Infrastructure & Finance	Bangalore Electricity Supply Company
50	Karnataka	Social Development	Education Department
51	Karnataka	Social Development	Health Department
52	Karnataka	Social Development	Karnataka Food and Civil Supplies
53	Karnataka	Social Development	Karnataka Police Department
54	Karnataka	Environment	Karnataka State Pollution Control Board
55	Karnataka	Infrastructure & Finance	Regional Transport Office
56	Karnataka	General Administration	Sub Registrars Office
57	Punjab	Agriculture & Rural Development	Animal Husbandry
58	Punjab	Agriculture & Rural Development	Dairy Development Department
59	Punjab	General Administration	Municipal Council
60	Rajasthan	Agriculture & Rural Development	Rural Development Department
61	Rajasthan	Social Development	Food and Civil Supplies Department
62	Rajasthan	Social Development	Labour Department
63	Rajasthan	Infrastructure & Finance	Land & Buildings Taxes Department
64	Rajasthan	General Administration	Police Department
65	Rajasthan	General Administration	Registration and Stamps Department
66	Rajasthan	Infrastructure & Finance	Revenue Department
67	Rajasthan	Infrastructure & Finance	Transport Department
68	Rajasthan	Social Development	Women & Child Development Department
69	Rajasthan	Social Development	Women's Hospital
70	TN	Infrastructure & Finance	Revenue Department
71	TN	Social Development	Civil Supplies Department

#	State	Sector	Charter Name
72	TN	Social Development	Department of Family Welfare
73	TN	Social Development	Education Department
74	TN	Social Development	Social Welfare/Nutritious Meal Scheme
75	TN	Social Development	Public Distribution System
76	TN	General Administration	Registration Department
77	TN	Infrastructure & Finance	Regional Transport Office
78	TN	Social Development	Social Welfare Department
79	TN	Infrastructure & Finance	Tamil Nadu Electricity Board
80	TN	Infrastructure & Finance	Transport Department

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