

LOK SATTA
People Power


Citizen's Charters – Tools for Accountability

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Lok Satta



“The most terrifying words in the English language are: ‘I’m from the government and I am here to help’ ”

Masters and Servants

- Governments exist to serve peoples' needs
- Citizens – Taxpayers – True masters
- Government employees – public servants
- Barometer of good governance – citizen's satisfaction

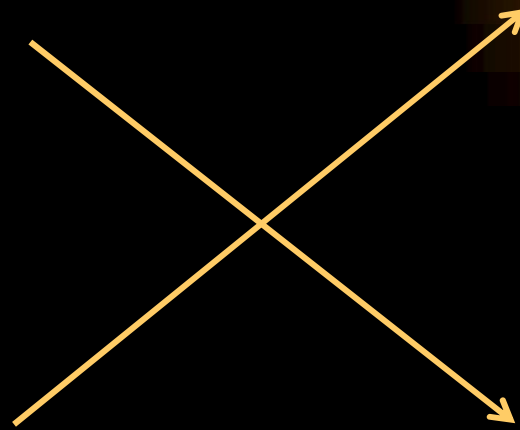
Role Reversal

Master / Sovereigns

Masters

Public Servants

Mendicants



Role Reversal – How and Why

Government Employees

70 % of organized work force in the country

Life time security

Dispenser of patronage

Better educated

Not accountable

Take protection under rules and procedures

Citizens / Private Domain

Only 8 million in a country of a one billion are in organized sector

Shadow of fear and indignity

Recipient in a system of license, quota, permit and subsidy

Mostly illiterate and ignorant

Unaware of their rights

Lack of information

Consequences of Role Reversal

- Officials – hostile, arrogant, corrupt, inefficient, inaccessible, feared
- Citizens – humiliated, harassed, fleeced, often pay a heavy price because of time lost and money wasted

Consequences of Role Reversal

Citizens

- Afraid of cops
- No access to govt. offices without bribing
- Can't get a decent education in govt. schools
- Provisions not available in ration shops
- Public health care in shambles
- Farmers cannot sell at a fair price shop
- Public utilities – substandard amenities with high prices
- Poor have no access to justice

Why Can't Citizens Resist

- There is vicious cycle of corruption mediated by transfers, and resulting in extortion for simple services
- Every segment of the cycle feels helpless to resist the trend
- The price of resistance is much higher than the benefit accrued
- Even honest public servants are passive and helpless



Why are you clearing it. Any VIP visiting the city ?

Crisis of Governance

- Inefficient state apparatus
- Criminalization of politics
- Money and muscle power in elections
- Unresponsive bureaucracy
- Ineffective judicial system
- Increasing lawlessness
- All pervasive corruption
- Political instability
- Erosion of legitimacy of authority

Why is Governance Vital?

- Governments spend Rs 18 billion every day
- Fiscal deficit (Union and States) remains at 10% of GDP
- 50% Union tax revenues go towards interest payment

Can Economic Reform Alone Deliver

- Small and focused government will certainly help
- Monopoly must give place to competition and free enterprise
- But government still has a large and critical role
- Government's key functions cannot be privatized and there is a natural monopoly

Irreducible Role of Government

- Public order
- Rule of law
- Justice
- School education
- Healthcare
- Infrastructure
- Natural resource development

What does the Citizen Expect?

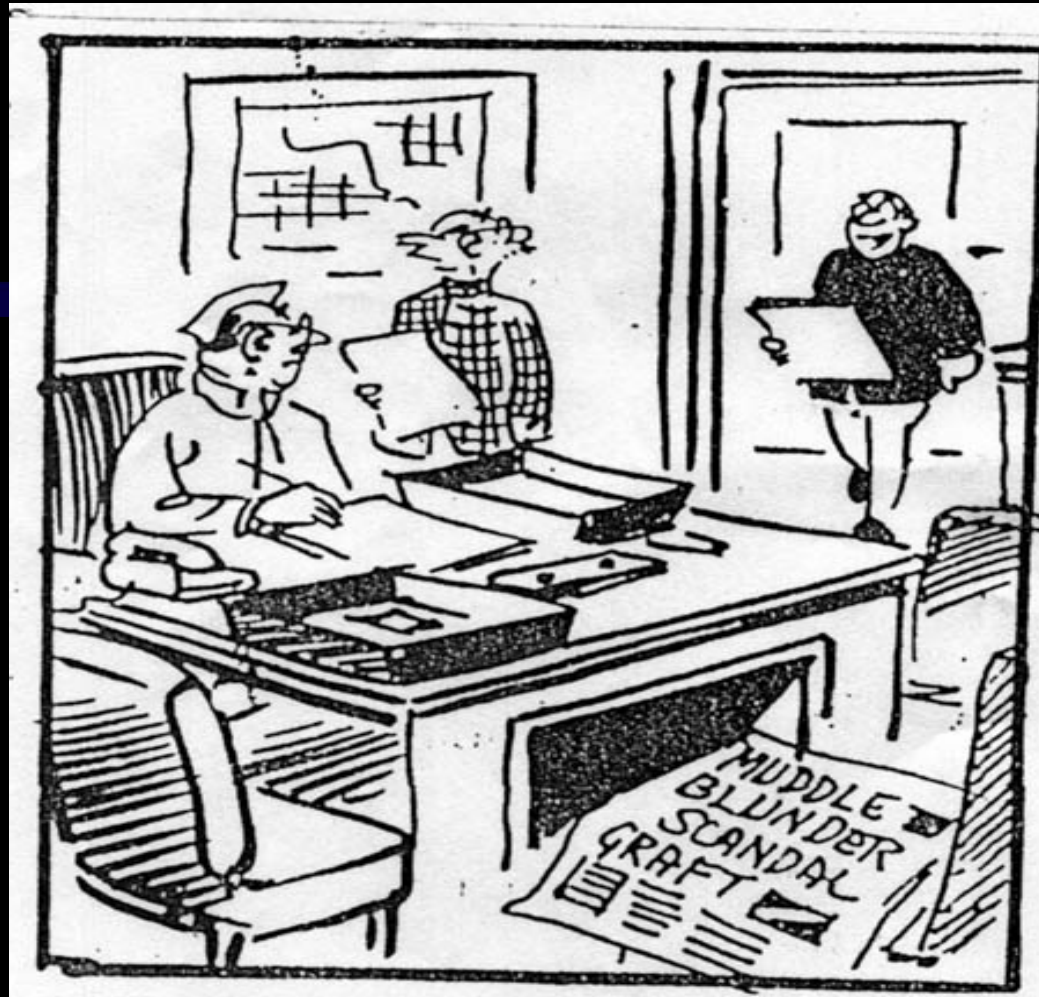
- Justice
- Dignity
- Vertical mobility

Way out

- Assert people's sovereignty
- Fundamental democratic transformation
- People-centered governance

Instruments of Accountability

- Right to Information
- Independent crime investigation
- Independent appointment of constitutional functionaries
- Independent and effective anti-corruption agency
- Term limits for public office
- Strict penalties for abuse of office
- **Citizen's Charters**
- Stakeholder empowerment



Good news, sir! The enquiry report says that no one is responsible in the entire administration for anything !

Citizen's Charter

- Citizen's Charter — for enhancing accountability and reducing corruption.
- Key ingredients :
 - Clearly defined responsibility
 - Well-defined and quantifiable performance standards
 - Compensation for non-performance
 - Instant redressal mechanisms

Lok Satta – Citizen's Charters

- Lok Satta's advocacy – Citizen's Charters introduced in 9 departments by AP government

Lok Satta – Citizen's Charters

- **Citizen's Charter for Municipalities in A.P. – Lok Satta's creation – provides for compensation of Rs. 50/- day for delay in services – first in India**
 - Issue of birth and death certificates (5 days)
 - Residential water connection (30 - 10 days OYT)
 - Approval of house construction plan (15 days)
 - Property tax assessment (15 days).

Lok Satta – Citizen's Charters

- In 1998, Lok Satta volunteers started random inspections of petrol stations
 - meters of 1500 petrol stations corrected
 - Rs. 10 million a day saved
 - cumulative benefit about Rs. 20 billion
- Several charters in Andhra Pradesh and elsewhere in India – numbering over 700
 - No-compensation and ineffective

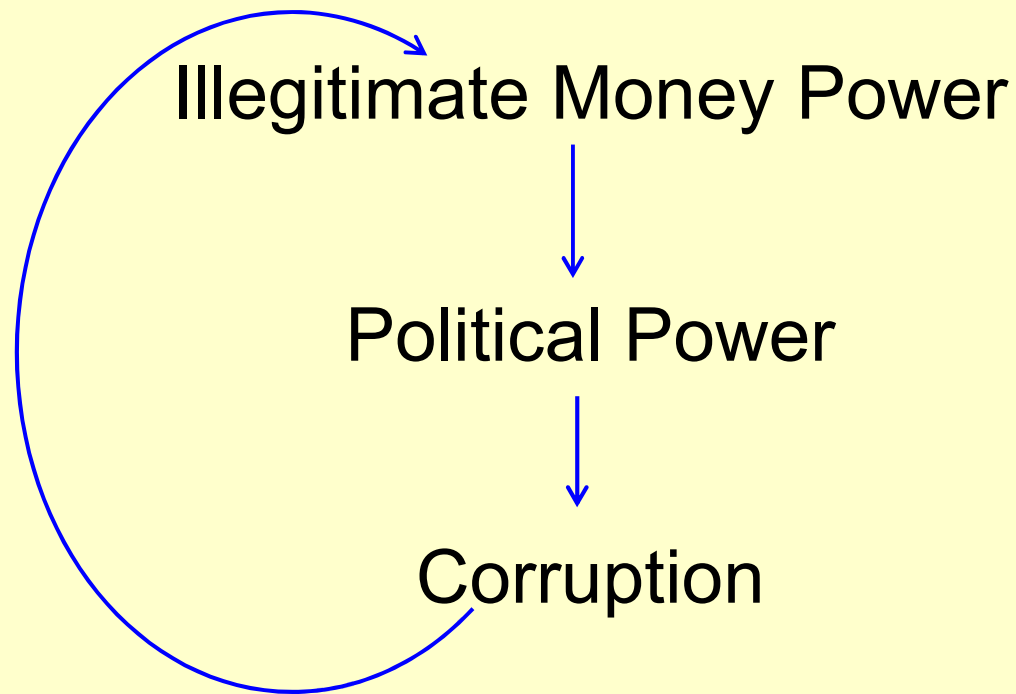
Making Citizen's Charters Effective

- Mass communication
- Enforcement through collective action
- Visible examples of successful collective citizens' initiatives
- Psychology of competition – matching awards for collecting compensation
- Civil Society groups can play a facilitating role

Prerequisites for Citizen's Charters

- Competition and choice are critical
- Absence of excessive discretion
- Transparency and simple procedures
- Effective decentralization
- Effective ombudsmen and swift punishment
- Informed citizenry

Inexhaustible Demand for Illegitimate Funds






The reputation of this office is getting from bad to worse. This chap wants to know where to give the bribe!

Key to Resolution

- Crisis is systemic
- Most players are victims of a vicious cycle
- Change of players not enough
- Change of rules of the game needed
- Values are not the issue
- Institutions are the key
- Resources are not a problem
- The way they are deployed is the key

Key Governance Reforms

- Comprehensive political reforms for truly accountable government
- Empowerment of local governments
- Instruments of accountability
- Speedy and efficient justice



“Awareness makes people easy to govern but impossible to enslave”