

LOK SATTA

People Power

Citizen's Charters

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The purpose of a government is to make it easy for
people to do good and difficult to do evil.

William Gladstone

Masters and Servants

- Elected democratic government serves people's collective needs
- Citizen's satisfaction - barometer of government's functioning
- Taxpayers (Citizens) - True masters
- Servants:
 - 13 million workers (Union & State - direct)
 - 7 million in PSUs (indirect)
 - 71% of organized sector
- The Indian administrative apparatus has made the government employees the true master

Masters and Servants

- An employee is treated with exaggerated deference – reason:
 - ➔ Illiteracy and ignorance
 - ➔ Lifetime security
 - ➔ Socialist mindset - public servant, a dispenser of government patronage
 - ➔ License, permit, quota or subsidy
 - ➔ No accountability
- Lack of information for the citizen
- Thick maze of rules, regulation and procedures
- No supervision

Role Reversal

- Citizens and public servants – role reversal
- Citizen faces – hostility, humiliation, harassment, delay, inefficiency, corruption, and indignity.
- Government officials – arrogant, inefficient and corrupt
- Between elections – citizen is a passive spectator
- About 50 % or more of the incumbent legislators are not re-elected in any election.
- Elections - change of players, not the rules of the game

Crisis of Governance

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

Why is Governance Vital?

- Governments spend Rs. 1800 crores every day
- Fiscal deficit (Union and States) remains at 10% of GDP
- 50% Union tax revenues go towards interest payment

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

Citizen's Charter

- Citizen's Charter - effective instrument to enhance accountability and reduce corruption.
- Four key prerequisites of a Citizen's Charter:
 - ➔ Clearly defined responsibility
 - ➔ Well-defined and quantifiable performance standards
 - ➔ Compensation for non-performance
 - ➔ Instant redressal mechanisms

Lok Satta – Citizen's Charters

- Citizen's Charters – introduced in 9 departments by AP government
 - State Electricity Board
 - Road Transport Corporation
 - Transport Department
 - Hyderabad Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board
 - Employment Exchanges
 - Commercial Taxes Department
 - Registration Department
- 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

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Lok Satta – Citizen's Charters

- Lok Satta's advocacy – Citizen Charters in Municipalities
 - Issue of birth and death certificates (5 days)
 - Residential water connection (30 days; 10 days under OYT)
 - Approval of house construction plan (15 days)
 - Property tax assessment (15 days).
 - A compensation of Rs 50 for every day's delay in service

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
 - cumulative benefit about Rs. 20 billion
- Several charters in Andhra Pradesh and elsewhere in India – numbering over 700
 - No-compensation and ineffective

Citizen's Charter in India – An Appraisal

Department of Posts – Survey Results

- Post Office : known as a citizen-friendly institution
- Awareness – Nine out of ten (front staff)
- Charter Preparation – Citizens not consulted
- Choice of services – No say for citizens
- No effective complaint redressal mechanism:
 - Citizens can lodge complaint only with Post Master General
 - No provisions to address complaints at grass roots

Citizen's Charter in India – An Appraisal

Department of Posts – Survey Results

- No periodic revision of Citizen's Charter
- None of the users ever heard of Citizen's Charter
- Only two staff members received training
- Copies of Citizen's Charter were not circulated among the staff
- No complaint box – no grievance was lodged ever since Citizen's Charter was implemented

Citizen's Charter in India – An Appraisal

Small Scale Industries – Survey Results

- Staff aware of Citizen's Charter
 - but no copies of Charter were available with them
 - very few were aware of salient features.
- No incentive structure for staff for adhering to Citizen's Charter
- Citizens were not consulted in the preparation of the Citizen's Charter

Citizen's Charter in India – An Appraisal

Small Scale Industries – Survey Results

- Choice of services – no say for citizens
- No strategy on publicity or awareness creation of Charters
- No single staff received training on Citizen's Charter
- Consumer visiting the department never heard of Citizen's Charter

Citizen's Charter in India – An Appraisal

Small Scale Industries – Survey Results

- No effective complaint redressal mechanism:
 - No proper records on complaints
 - No record of grievance ever since Citizen's Charter were implemented
 - No feed back mechanisms
- No system monitoring or reviewing the implementation of Citizen's Charter
- No internal or external evaluation

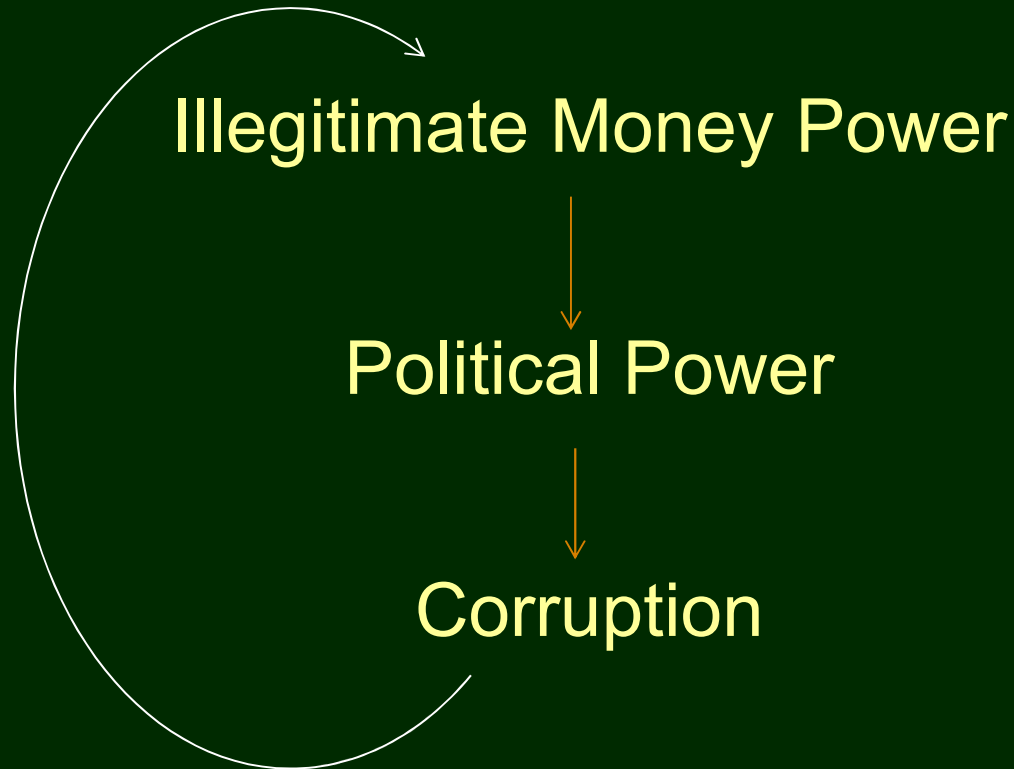
Making Citizen's Charters Effective

- 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 excessive discretion
- Transparency and simple procedures
- Effective decentralization
- Effective ombudsmen and swift punishment
- Informed citizenry

Inexhaustible Demand for Illegitimate Funds



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

“Strategy without tactics is the slowest route to victory. Tactics without strategy is the noise before defeat ”

- Sun Tzu