

Citizen Centric Administration

Citizen Centric Administration means placing citizens at the centre of modern public administration. This can be achieved by addressing the immediate concerns of citizens i.e. transparency, efficiency, stability and continuity in the governance systems. The Government at all levels has endeavored to provide a citizen centric administration by

1. Providing Robust Legal Framework
2. Creation of Institutions such as Lokayuktas, National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), National Women's Commission (NWC), National Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission etc.

The **12th Report of 2nd Administrative Reforms Commission (ARC)** extensively dealt with **Citizen Centric Administration**. Veerappa Moily was the chairperson of the 2nd ARC.

Core Principles of Citizen Centric Administration

2nd Administrative Reforms Commission (ARC) has given the following core principles for making Governance citizen centric.

1. Rule of Law - Zero Tolerance Strategy
2. Making Institutions vibrant, responsive and accountable.
3. Decentralization
4. Transparency
5. Civil Service Reforms
6. Ethics in Governance
7. Process Reforms
8. Periodic and independent evaluation of the quality of Governance.

To Make the Administration more Citizen Centric, the 2nd ARC has examined the following strategies, processes, tools and mechanisms.

1. Re-engineering processes to make Governance 'citizen centric'.
2. Adoption of Appropriate Modern Technology
3. Right to Information
4. Citizens Charters
5. Independent Evaluation of Services.
6. Grievance Redressal Mechanisms
7. Active Citizens Participation - Public Private Partnerships

Concept of Citizen Centric Administration

The concept of good governance existed even during the days of Chanakya. He had mentioned it elaborately in Arthashastra. Citizens centric administration lies on the foundation of good governance. Good governance is made up of the following 8 attributes.

1. Accountable
2. Transparent
3. Responsive
4. Participatory
5. Consensus Oriented
6. Follows Rule of Law
7. Effective and efficient
8. Equitable and Inclusive.

4 Main Pillars of Good Governance

The good governance aims at providing public services effectively, efficiently and equitably to the citizens. Good governance aims at providing an environment in which all citizens irrespective of caste, class and gender can develop to their full potential.

1. Ethos (of service to the citizens)
2. Ethics (Honesty, Integrity and Transparency)
3. Equity (Treating all citizens alike with empathy for weaker sections)
4. Efficiency (Speedy and effective delivery of service without harassment and using ICT increasingly).

Barriers to Good Governance

There are many barriers to good governance as per the 12th Report of 2nd ARC . They are mentioned below.

1. **Attitudinal Problems of Civil Servants** - As per the 2nd ARC report Civil Servants have become inflexible, self-perpetuating, inward looking.
2. **Lack of Accountability** - Very rarely disciplinary actions are initiated against delinquent officers. There is no performance evaluation structure.
3. **Red Tapism** - Bureaucracies have to adhere to rules and procedures which are important for good governance, however sometimes these rules and procedures are ill conceived and cumbersome and they do not serve the very purpose of their existence.
4. **Low Levels of Awareness of the Rights and Duties of Citizens** - Awareness of rights and duties would ensure that officials and other citizens discharge duties effectively and honestly.

5. **Ineffective Implementation of Laws and Rules** - We have a large number of laws to protect the rights of the citizens and vulnerable sections of society, but weak implementation of these laws erodes the faith of the citizens in the Government machinery.

Functions of Government

Functions of Government are wide ranging and it can be classified into 5 types which are mentioned below.

1. **Self Preservation** - It is protecting from external and internal aggression. This function is discharged by the Government by raising and maintaining Police, Law Enforcement Agencies, and Indian Armed Forces. They are empowered through legislations.
2. **Supervision and Resolution of Conflicts** - Here democracy must be strengthened, ensuring equity to all citizens, setting up conflict resolution mechanisms.
3. **Socio-Economic Development** - Bringing in measures so that welfare of the weaker and vulnerable sections of the society are protected.
4. **Regulation of the Economy** - Adopting sound fiscal and monetary policies by the Government is one of the major duties.
5. **Provision of Goods and Services** - With emphasis of Socio -Economic Development, Government are major providers of goods and services such as education, health and public distribution of food grains etc.

Citizens Charters

Citizen charter program was launched in May 1997. As of February 2007, 650 citizen charters were developed by various departments and agencies of state governments and Union Territories. At Union level 115 Citizen Charters have been formulated

Citizen Charter - Meaning and Objectives

1. Citizen Charter is a public statement
2. Citizen Charter defines the entitlements of citizens to a specific service, standards of service, the conditions to be met by users
3. The Remedies available for users in case of non-compliance of standards.
4. The main aim of citizen charter is to make public services citizen centric.
5. Citizen Charter ensures that the services are demand driven rather than supply driven.

Citizens Participation in Administration

As per the Commission, the mechanism for citizens participation in the governance can take the following forms.

1. Citizens seeking Information
2. Citizens giving suggestions
3. Citizens demanding better services
4. Citizens holding service providers and other agencies accountable
5. Active citizens participation in administration/decision making.

Decentralisation and Delegation

Decentralisation is transfer of powers away from the center to the local branches or governments. Delegation of powers is entrusting one's powers to the others.

Benefits of Delegation

1. Saves time
2. Develops people
3. Grooms and motivates a successor
4. Increase productivity
5. Provides invaluable training to associates and employees.

Barriers of Delegation

1. Reluctance on the part of superiors to delegate for various reasons like lack of trust, difficulty in monitoring, supervision; feeling that his subordinates will get all the credit and he believes he can do the task better.
2. Reluctance by the subordinates to accept delegation due to various reasons like fear of making mistakes, fear of criticism from supervisors, lack of self confidence.

Grievance Redressal Mechanism

There are many institutional mechanisms to work on citizens' grievance redressal mechanisms. Some of them are mentioned below

1. Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG)
2. Directorate of Public Grievances (DPG)
3. Lokpal
4. Lokayukta
5. Chief Vigilance Commission (CVC)
6. Ombudsman
7. Committees
8. Tribunals

Consumer Protection

There are consumer courts for disposal of cases, yet there are inordinate delays in delivering the justice. As per reports, very low percentage of cases are resolved in a stipulated time period of 90 days, the average period of disposal of cases was 150 days. Some of the reasons for delay in final settlement of disputes are mentioned below.

1. Lack of infrastructure
2. Delay in Appointments of Chairpersons and Members.
3. Rigid adoption of procedures
4. Liberal grant of adjournments.

The Committee notes that Lok Adalats have been effective in addressing the grievances of consumers.

Laws Enacted for Protection of Consumers' Interests

Some of the laws enacted are mentioned below.

1. Consumer Protection Act 1986, it was amended in 2019.
2. Prevention of Food Adulteration Act, 1954.
3. Essential Commodities Act
4. Rules and Regulations under the Municipal Acts of the States.

Special Institutional Mechanism - 8 Institutions

Some sections of the citizens are more vulnerable than the others, hence there is a need for institutions which redress grievances specific to them. The Government of India has constituted several commissions through statutes to safeguard the rights of different sections of society. 8 commissions are mentioned below. These are special types of citizen centric measures.

National Commission for Scheduled Castes (NCSC)

The Office of Commissioner for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes was established as per Article 338 of the Constitution. After the 46th Amendment a multi member Commission was constituted in 1978, it was renamed as the National Commission for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in 1987. As per the 89th Constitutional Amendment in 2003, separate commissions were formed for Scheduled Castes and Tribes. Hence National Commission for Scheduled Castes (NCSC) was constituted in 2004. It must safeguard the rights of Scheduled Castes. This Commission has the powers of a Civil Court.

National Commission for Scheduled Tribes (NCST)

This commission was constituted in 2004. It was formed after insertion of Article 338A, by carrying out the 89th amendment of the constitution. NCST has 6 regional offices, it handles socio-economic, educational development, service safeguards and atrocities related to Scheduled Tribes.

National Human Rights Commission

It was constituted in 1994 following the enactment of Protection of Human Rights Act, 1993.

National Commission for Women (NCW)

NCW was set up as a statutory body in 1992 after the enactment of National Commission for Women Act, 1990. They are mandated to redress the grievances related to women.

National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR)

NCPCR was set up in 2007 as a statutory body after the enactment of Commissions for Protection Child Rights Act, 2005; to protect, promote and defend child rights in the country.

National Backward Classes Commission (NBCC)

NBCC was constituted in 1993 with the enactment of National Commission for Backward Classes Act, 1993. The mandate is to examine the complaints of over-inclusion or under-inclusion of any class of citizens in a list of Backward classes.

National Commission for Minorities (NCM)

NCM was constituted as a statutory body in 1993 following the enactment of National Commission for Minorities Act 1992. Their mandate is to safeguard the interests of minorities in India.

National Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission

This statutory commission was constituted after the enactment of Consumer Protection Act 1986. The mandate of this commission is to redress the grievances related to consumer disputes. This commission has been bestowed with Judicial Powers.

