

(Articles covered - E Governance: grievance redress for a new India & Bringing information to citizens & Citizen's Charter in India)

INGRAM (consumerhelpline.gov.in)

This website has been launched by the Department of Consumer Affairs to create awareness, advise and redress consumer grievances and act as a central registry for lodging consumer complaints.

The Department of Consumer Affairs has launched this portal as an integrated Grievance Redress Mechanism (INGRAM) for bringing all Stakeholders such as Consumers, Central and State Government Agencies, Private Companies, Regulators, Ombudsmen and call centres etc. onto a single platform. The portal will also help in creating awareness among consumers to protect their rights and inform them of their responsibilities. Consumers can register online their grievances through this portal.

RTI

Right to Information (RTI) is an Act of the Parliament of India to provide for setting out the practical regime of right to information for citizens and replaces the erstwhile Freedom of information Act, 2002. Under the provisions of the Act, any citizen of India may request information from a "public authority" (a body of Government or "instrumentality of State") which is required to reply expeditiously or within thirty days. The Act also requires every public authority to computerise their records for wide dissemination and to proactively certain categories of information so that the citizens need minimum recourse to request for information formally.

CITIZEN'S CHARTER

Citizen's Charter is a document which represents a systematic effort to focus on the commitment of the Organisation towards its Citizens in respects of Standard of Services, Information, Choice and Consultation, Non-discrimination and Accessibility, Grievance Redress, Courtesy and Value for Money.

The concept of Citizens' Charter protects the trust between the service provider and its users. Citizens' Charter was first expressed and implemented in the United Kingdom by the Conservative Government of John Major in 1991 as a national programme with aim to constantly improve the quality of public services for the people of the country so that these services respond to the needs and wishes of the users.

Citizen charter is necessary for:

- To make administration accountable and citizen friendly.
- To ensure transparency.
- To take measures to improve customer service.
- To adopt a stakeholder approach.

- To save time of both Administration and the citizen.

SEVOTTAM

Sevottam is an assessment - improvement model that has been developed with the objective of improving the quality of public service delivery in the country. The model was conceived by the Department of Administrative Reforms & Public Grievances (DARPG), Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions in 2006 on the recommendations of second ARC.

The word "Sevottam" is a combination of two Hindi words: Seva (Service) and Uttam (Excellent). It means "Service Excellence", emphasizing the idea of "Service". It symbolizes the change in mindset within the Government, from administration and control to service and enablement.

The key components of Sevottam are captured with the following objectives:

Successful implementation of Citizen's Charters: It requires opening up a channel for receiving citizens' inputs into the way in which organizations determine service delivery requirements. Citizens' Charter publicly declare the information on citizens' entitlements; making citizens better informed and hence empowering them to demand better services.

Service Delivery Preparedness and achievement of Results: An organization can have an excellent performance in service delivery only if it is managing the key inputs for good service delivery well, and building its own capacity to continuously improve delivery. This shall include identification of services rendered, the service delivery process, its control and delivery requirements.

Sound Public Grievance Redress Mechanism: This requires a good grievance redress system operating in a manner that leaves the citizen more satisfied with how the organization responds to complaints/grievances, irrespective of the final decision.

AWARD SCHEME

The Government of India has instituted "Prime Ministers Awards for Excellence in Public Administration" to acknowledge, recognize and reward the extraordinary and innovative work done by officers of the Central and State Governments in terms of Grievance redressal. All officers of Central & State Governments individually or as a group or as organizations are eligible for consideration.

Those eligible for awards are evaluated not just on basis of number of cases disposed but also a feedback mechanism is present to ascertain the quality of grievance disposal.

OTHER MECHANISMS

LOK ADALAT

Lok Adalat is one of the alternative dispute redressal mechanisms, it is a forum where disputes/cases pending in the court of law or at pre-litigation stage are settled/ compromised amicably. Special Lok Adalats to settle grievances against specific departments are organised from time to time to dispose grievances in bulk.

JAN SUNWAI

Jan Sunwais are public hearings where people (or their representatives) directly interact with public officials to get their grievances addressed.

Uttar Pradesh Government has launched the mobile App for registering citizen's grievances/suggestions. The Mobile App is linked to the Jansunwai(IGRS) portal of Uttar Pradesh Government, where grievances/suggestions can also be registered through Web.

SOCIAL AUDIT

A social audit is a way of measuring, understanding, reporting and ultimately improving an organization's social and ethical performance. A social audit helps to narrow gaps between vision/goal and reality, between efficiency and effectiveness.