

1. 'Citizen Charters are nothing but a code of conduct on part of the public officials imposed by themselves to provide services on a better note to citizens. Discuss why citizen charter has not succeeded in India? (250 words)

Answer:

The Citizens' Charter (CC) is an instrument which seeks to make an organization transparent, accountable, and citizen friendly. This helps the users to understand the type of services they can expect from a particular service provider. In May 1997, the programme was launched in India.

The CC has not been a success in India, because:

- In a majority of cases, the Charters were not formulated through a consultative process;
- By and large, service providers were not familiar with the philosophy, goals, and main features of the Charter;
- Adequate publicity to the Charters had not been given in any of the Departments evaluated. In most Departments, the Charters are only in the initial or middle stage of implementation; and
- No funds have been specifically earmarked for awareness generation of Citizens' Charter or for orientation of the staff on various components of the Charter.

Thus to be effective CC should follow following guidelines:

- The Charter must be framed not only by senior experts, but by interaction with the cutting edge staff who will finally implement it and with the users (individual organizations);
- Merely announcing the Charter will not change the way we function. It is important to create conditions through interaction and training for generating a responsive climate;
- Citizens' Charters must be precise and make firm commitments of service delivery standards to the citizens/consumers in quantifiable terms wherever possible.
- Citizens' Charter should clearly lay down the relief which the organization is bound to provide if it has defaulted on the promised standards of delivery. In addition, wherever there is a default in the service delivery by the organization, citizens must also have recourse to a grievances redressal mechanism.
- Every organization must conduct periodic evaluation of its Citizens' Charter preferably through an external agency on lines of audit and credit ratings done in private sector. This agency while evaluating the Charter of the organization should also make an objective analysis of whether the promises made therein are being delivered within the defined parameters.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

Answer the following Questions

1. Examine whether WHO's essential diagnostic list would help India in better rolling out of its free diagnostic services. Discuss how diagnostic services help improve primary healthcare? (250 words)
2. Examine the advantages of and issues involved in creation of DNA database for India? (250 words)

VANIKIAS