



**LOK SATTA**

*People Power*

**Service Quality : Indian Experiment with Citizen's Charter**

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# True Swaraj

The real *Swaraj* will come  
not by the acquisition of authority by a few,  
but by the acquisition of the capacity by all  
to resist authority when abused

- *Gandhiji*

# Why is Governance Vital?

- Governments spend Rs. 1800 crores every day
- Out of 27 million organised workers, government employs 70%
- Fiscal deficit (Union and States) remains at 10 % GDP
- 50% Union tax revenues go towards interest payment

# Is Money the issue?

## Sanitation

- 140 million toilets needed
- Cost: Rs 35000 crores
- Equals just 20 days expenditure

## School Education

- 1.6 million class rooms needed
  - Capital cost : Rs 16,000 crores – 9 days govt. expenditure
  - Recurring expenditure : Rs.8000 crores – 5 days govt. expenditure
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# In a Sane Democracy

- Political process should resolve the crisis
- Parties, elections and public office are the route to reform
- In India a vicious cycle operates

# Failure of Political Process

- Parties
    - Autocratic and unaccountable
    - Repel the best
    - A problem, not solution
    - Choice - Tweedledom & Tweedledee
  - Elections
    - Change of players
    - No change of rules of game
    - Criminalization
    - Money power
    - Flawed process
      - Electoral rolls (40% errors)
      - Bogus voting (22%)
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# Campaign Expenditure – Vicious Cycle

- Illegitimate expenses are often 5-10 times the ceiling or more

(Assembly ceiling:           Rs 6 lakhs  
Lok Sabha ceiling:        Rs 15 lakhs)

- Every crore spent illegitimately



Rs 10 crore returns

(to cover ROR, Interest, personal upkeep, supporters, family's future, next election costs)



Rs 100 crore collected through bureaucracy

(for every legislator, there are 2000 employees who need to collect 'rent')



people suffer ten times more.

Payment extorted, on pain of delay, harassment, humiliation, anxiety and greater loss.

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# Irreducible Role of Government

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

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

# Need of the Hour

**Informed Citizenry with the capacity to:**

- Resist mis-governance
- Check corruption
- Influence public discourse
- Channelize resources
- Enforce better services

**All these require information**

# Key Governance Reforms

- Comprehensive electoral reforms
- Empowerment of local governments
- Instruments of accountability
- Speedy and efficient justice

# 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
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# What can Civil Society do?

- When political process fails, the ball is with citizens, the ultimate sovereigns
- Local assertion
- State-level reforms
- National platform for larger reforms

# What can Citizens do?

- Resist misgovernance
- Check corruption
- Influence public discourse
- Channel resources better
- Enforce better services
- Bring pressure for reforms

# Approaches to Citizens' Action

- Collective, informed assertion
- Wide dissemination of information
- Effective mass communication
- Strategic intervention

# Where will Citizens' Charters Succeed

- Clearly defined services
- Quantifiable goals
- No supply scarcity
- Well-established procedures



# What Should a Citizen's Charter Contain

- Clearly defined responsibility for the service
- Precise procedures (citizen's obligations) to get service
- Well-defined and quantifiable performance standards
- Compensation for non-performance
- Instant redressal mechanism

# When will Compensation Work?

- Delegation to the local authority/agency
- No scarcity of supply
- Flexibility to improve speed/rate of delivery
- User fee for service

# A model Charter – UK Electric utility LOK SATTA

Service	Guaranteed standard performance level	Penalty payment
Supplier's fuse failures	With 4 hours of any notification during working hours	10
Restoring electricity supply after faults	24 hours	20 (domestic customers) 50 (non domestic customers, plus 10 for each further 12 hours)
Estimating charges	Within 10 working days for simple jobs or 20 working days for most others	20
Notice of supply interruption	2 days	10 (domestic customers) 20 (non domestic customers)
Voltage complaints	Visit or reply within 10 working days	10
Meter problems	Visit or reply within 10 working days	10
Charges and payment queries	A substantive reply within 10 days must be kept	10
Appointments	All appointments to visit on a day must be kept	10

# Citizen's Charters – AP Experience

- People's charter released on Oct 2, 1998
- Massive public education campaign 1998
- Citizens' monitoring of petrol stations for short delivery 1998-99
- Complete cessation of short delivery –99 (Rs 10m saved per day)
- Citizen's charters announced in 9 departments - 2000

# Path Breaking Charters

- Municipalities in AP
- 5 services
  - Birth certificates – 5 days
  - Death certificates – 5 days
  - Water connection
  - House-building permission
  - Tax assessment
- Compensation of Rs 50/day's delay
- Now being enforced with citizens' vigil

# Panchayats' Charter on the Anvil

- 20 services
- Time frames – 1 to 30 days
- Compensation of Rs 10 per day

# Other Local Reforms with Synergies

- Right to information
- Empowerment of local governments
- Stakeholder empowerment
- Local courts for speedy justice

“The punishment suffered by the wise who refuse to take part in the government, is to live under the government of bad men”

- *Plato*