

Way ahead:

In order to ensure effective functioning of the citizen's charter, a spectrum of measures and holistic strategy need to be put in place. The following are a few effective strategies that could be employed.

1. **Sevottam model** including Citizen's charter, Service delivery capability and Grievance redressal need to be put in place for an integrated implementation of public service delivery framework.
2. **2nd ARC** recommended **nine principles** for the desired functioning of the citizen's charter:
 - a. One size does not fit all.
 - b. Citizens' Charter should be prepared for each independent unit under the overall umbrella of the organizations' charter.
 - c. Wide consultation which includes Civil Society in the process.
 - d. Firm commitments to be made.
 - e. Internal processes and structure should be reformed to meet the commitments given in the Charter.
 - f. Redressal mechanism in case of default.
 - g. Periodic evaluation of Citizens' Charters.
 - h. Benchmark using end-user feedback.
 - i. Hold officers accountable for results
3. The first **British model of Citizen's Charter** laid down six principles including Quality, Choice, Standards, Value, Accountability, and Transparency. These need to be taken into account while drafting the charter.
4. **Delhi government's model**: The Delhi government implemented a scheme for the doorstep delivery of 40 essential services to the citizens like driving licenses, water connections, caste certificate etc.
 - a. **Compensation for non-performance**: For instance, **Thalys International** (a train in Europe) provides compensation for late running.
 - b. **Simple and comprehensible charter**: Parliamentary Standing Committee on Personnel, Public Grievances, Law and Justice suggested that the charter should be precise and as far as possible simple and **spoken language** should be used.
 - c. **Regular updation**: The citizen's charter of any organizations needs to be updated from time to time with changing needs and requirements of the citizens. A periodic review exercise can be put in place for such an updation.

Good governance has eight major principles. It is **participatory, consensus-oriented, accountable, transparent, responsive, effective and efficient, equitable and inclusive and follows the rule of law**. Citizen's charter can ensure the manifestation of each of these principles and could ensure "**strong institutions**" as stipulated in **SDG 16**. (1020 words)