

RIGHT TO TIMELY DELIVERY OF PUBLIC SERVICES – A NECESSITY FOR PROMOTING CITIZEN-CENTRIC ADMINISTRATION IN 21ST CENTURY INDIA¹

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ABSTRACT

State provides numerous government services to the citizens in their respective jurisdiction through the various government departments. Prior to 2010 no government department were accountable to the citizens for providing services within a time bound period. There were no law which could compel department officials to provide services within a specified time, which led to corruption, inordinate delay in providing services, discrimination among the powerful and weak citizens, thereby making government departments ineffective and inefficient. To curb these problems government initiated several programme to provide timely services to the citizens but these initiatives were not successful completely. In 2011 the Central Government had introduced the Right of Citizens for Time Bound Delivery of Goods and Services and Redressal of their Grievances Bill in Parliament. The bill conferred every individual citizen the right to time bound delivery of goods and services, and redressal of grievances if there is any. Subsequently several State Governments have enacted similar legislations to provide to fulfil the citizenship rights of the common people. A study of the Right to Public Services legislation in India indicates a legislative initiative to promote administrative efficiency and citizen centric administration. A set of common features have been identified in the various statutes which aims to guarantee time bound delivery of services for various public services rendered by the Government to citizen and provides a mechanism for punishing the errant public servant who is deficient in providing the service stipulated under the statute. Right to Service legislation are meant to reduce corruption among the government officials and to increase transparency and public accountability. The aim of the paper has been to trace the growth of Citizens Charters in India and to compare and identify the common features of the various Service Delivery legislations in India.

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INTRODUCTION

India is a democratic republic governed by the Constitution of India. The Constitution under Article 246 has given power to Union Government and State governments to make laws on the respective subject as per the Union list and the State list, and the Concurrent list empowers both Union Government and State Governments to make legislations on the subjects.

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In this working paper the researchers have discussed the fundamental problems faced by the citizens in availing government services and consequently how the right based approach through the right to delivery of service legislations may provide an effective instrument to fight government inertia and corruption, and pave the way for a citizen centric administration.

PUBLIC SERVICES AND THE CONCERNS OF THE CITIZENS

Indian republic is a federation of States governed by the Constitution of India. The Constitution fulfils the federal objective by classifying the governance of the country between the Union Government and the State Governments, and accordingly divides the various subject matters of legislative and executive governance². But regardless of the clear cut division of the subject matter among Centre and State government, citizens are given most importance and they can claim their right to receive public services both from State Government as well as Central Government. In a welfare state, the citizen is at the centre of governance and both governments are committed to work for welfare of common people.

In a welfare state the government provides numerous services and facilities to citizens. On one hand it secures safety and security of life and property to the citizens and on the other hand it facilities the citizens by ensuring smooth conduct of various activities such as travel, business, transport, amusement and entertainment etc. The State is under the obligation to undertake welfare programme scheme to uplift the weaker section of the people. The government manages and administers all these services and schemes through its various departments and organisation.

² Article 246, Schedule VII of the Constitution of India

In order to lead a life as a first class citizen, irrespective of their economic status, people require access to government services, approvals, licences, certificates from appropriate government departments and agencies. However, it is not always easy to get these services, approvals, licences or certificates from the departments because traditionally access to these services were not considered as right based entitlements of the citizens and were dependent on the whims and fancies of government officials. In case of denial, the citizen had only two alternatives to choose from either accept the denial and suffer or approach the higher judiciary for writ remedies. The writ remedies were not often deemed satisfactory because there was no statutory obligation to provide in the majority of government services.

Another important limitation was the discretionary nature of the government services. Under the Seventh Schedule of the Constitution subject matters were classified between the Centre and States wherein State Governments were entrusted to provide a horde of services, including implementation of Central sponsored schemes such as Public Distribution System (PDS), registration of marriage, death, birth, caste certificate, local police verification etc. In most circumstances in the absence of legal entitlements, the grant of these services were dependent on State will and availability of resources such as financial capacity, management, distribution capacity, technical and administrative skill etc.

Some of the important services provided by the State are safety and security of people through the police department. The police department is managed and maintained by the State Government, which not only maintains law and order, but also provides numerous other services like clearance to hold a public event, character certificate, arms licence, permission for public gathering, NOC for passport verification, NOC for the hotel restaurant, police verification etc. An individual citizen, while applying for any of these services does not have a legal right to demand the fulfilment of the services, but depends upon the will of the concerned police officers. Lack of legal entitlement often resulted in corruption and delay in grant of service.

A very prominent example of abuse of power is witnessed in the case of issuance of Ration Card for a person living below the poverty line. In case at the time of inquiry the department finds that the applicant is not living below poverty line and accordingly denies services to him, it will not be abuse of power but on the other hand it is found that the person is extremely poor and officials deny him BPL Ration Card and demands bribe would be an instance of gross abuse of power. The vulnerability of the poor citizen increases manifold because Ration Card is provided by the State Government Departments alone and no private entities are authorised to issue Ration Card. Thus a poor and ignorant citizen is totally dependent on the will of the local

officers for accessing essential services and there are no effective remedies available to him, in case of denial.

Similarly in case a citizen requires an income certificate for his agricultural income, then he should apply to Tehsildar office in his jurisdiction. However, Tehsildar usually does not accept application directly from the applicant but through the subordinate of the Tehsildar deputed for this purpose who accepts the application for the income certificate and caste certificate. The subordinate of the Tehsildar is known as *Patwari*, or *Lekhpal*³. The *Lekhpal* or *patwari* is the person who keeps the record of the land of his jurisdiction and Tehsildar furnish any income certificate or caste certificate only upon the consultation from the *Lekhpal*. Thus legally, Tehsildar is dependent on the *Lekhpal*. This unique situation provides the advantageous position to the *Lekhpaal* gives him the chance to treat the applicant as per his personal choice and preference. Usually, if a person needs an income certificate he must please *Lekhpal* for getting income certificate. If *Lekhpal* is not pleased he can withhold application on the various ground, such as person is not eligible, or if income certificate is furnished it will show such high income making it of no use for the applicant. Sometimes he may also make excuse that Tehsildar is not in office or the certificate is not yet ready. The question is how *Lekhpal* does all such things? Answer is very simple, most of the people who need income certificate belong to the rural area. They are mostly poor and illiterate, and they need income certificate for an official purpose. Thus the applicant's vulnerable situation provides undue advantage to the *Lekhpal* to exploit them. It should be noted that if the applicant is denied income certificate, the Tehsildar or *Lekhpal* is under no legal obligation to provide a written reason for denial.

Further consider a situation wherein the applicant has not been granted income certificate by the Tehsildar office. What would be the legal procedure if income certificate is not provided? The applicant will have to approach Assistant Commissioner's office, but bearing in mind that Assistant Commissioner has no judicial power but quasi-judicial power to call the defaulting officer (*Lekhpal* or Tehsildar) for the purpose of granting income certificate on the application of the applicant. This whole procedure is repetitive and time consuming, and like in the case of most government offices, the applicant needs to visit 3 to 4 times for pursuing his application without any surety that he will get income certificate. This procedure will be again repeated with Deputy Commissioner's office if the applicant does not get his income certificate from Assistant Commissioner's office. The Deputy Commissioner in most cases works as District Magistrate

³ These officials are known differently in different areas. Like in Karnataka they are known as Revenue Inspector and Village Accountant for detail See Karnataka Revenue Act 1964.

who is responsible for managing the entire department of the district and is often burdened with administrative work.

Now the relevant question is why the government officials or departments deny or delay services to the common people. Prior to 2010 there were no law which could compel department officials to provide services within a specified time.⁴ Absence of statutory obligations gave rise to corruption, inordinate delay in providing services, discrimination between the powerful and weak citizens etc.

PUBLIC SERVICES AND AVAILABILITY OF LEGAL REMEDIES

Under the Indian legal system there are multiple alternative remedies available to the citizens to fulfil their legal demands and entitlements. But a brief analysis of these remedial mechanisms would indicate their inadequacies in providing the citizens with a quick, effective and inexpensive alternative.

Lok Adalat

Lok Adalat was created under the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987. It is a system of alternative dispute resolution. The Lok Adalat is commonly referred to as "People's court". Under Sec.19 of the statute every State Legal Services Authority, District Legal Services Authority, Supreme Court Legal Services Committee or High Court Legal Services Committee or the Taluka Legal Service Committee may organise Lok Adalats for arriving at a compromise or settlement of disputes between the parties which are either pending before the courts or which are yet to be brought before the courts. The Lok Adalats are presided over by a Chairperson, who is either a sitting or retired judge, along with two other members. In Lok Adalats there is no court fee which is required to be paid by either of the parties. On transfer of a case from the regular court the fee paid will be refunded to the parties. In Lok Adalat the procedural laws are not followed but fairness is established by following the principles of natural justice. The Lok Adalats have been established for deciding various disputes such as traffic dispute, electricity dispute, land dispute etc. One of the major limits of Lok Adalats is the *non-permanent* status of institution and its dependence on the priorities of the authorities to dispose of matters.

Consumer Court

The Consumer Protection Act, 1986, has been enacted to deal with consumer interests and protect consumer rights. The consumer fora deals with deficiency in services and defects in

⁴In 2010 the Central Government as well State Governments made initiative to bring Public Service Guaranties Act in force and more than 50% of States passed and implemented these Public services Grantees Act

goods and products. The consumer or the beneficiary can approach the consumer courts for cheap and expeditious remedies. The major limitation of the consumer legislation is the issue of payment of money or consideration to be recognized as 'consumer'. With relation to delivery of public services, except few services like electricity and postal services, citizens are generally beneficiaries of those services as *free services*, hence in majority cases non-delivery or delay in government services do not the citizens to enjoy the advantages of the consumer courts.

Tribunal

Tribunals are quasi-judicial authorities. They have trappings of the court but unlike courts they have specific jurisdictions conferred by statutes. The tribunals are not bound to follow the procedural rules but needs to determine dispute based on principle of natural justice. The primary objective of tribunalization is to promote for expert-based speedy and inexpensive redressal system. Tribunals have been established to deal with matters relating to Sales Tax, The Central Excise and Service Tax, administrative services, Intellectual Property matters etc. Hence it might be prudent to enact a law establishing a Public Services Tribunal for providing citizens with alternative remedy.

Lokayukta

Lokayukta has been created as an anti-corruption instruction. It has been appointed to bring in accountability in the public administration by preventing maladministration. The Lokayukta has been empowered to initiate actions in cases of corruption, favouritism and other forms of administrative indiscipline. The Lokayukta has the power to investigate and report to the government on the misconducts and corruption amongst public servants. A citizen can approach the Lokayukta in case he suffers from any *injustice* or *undue hardship* as a consequence of maladministration under the Lokayukta Act 1984. The institution of Lokayukta has tremendous potential but the mandate has to be widened to include issues relating to non-delivery of public services.

Judicial Approach

If citizen is seeking any services from the government and government department has denied services, then aggrieved person can go to the court. Now the question is which court the citizen can go to? It depends on what the law is on the issue, such as, supposedly if electricity is distributed and supplied by the state department, if there is problem of excessive billing, the aggrieved person will first approach to the department to resolve the issue, however, if it fails,

he/she can sue the department in Consumer Forum, District Court or Tribunal if available. The same can be applied to the telephone connection or for the water supply or other services. There are some instances where a person seeking services from the government who has been denied the services, has approached all concern officials for redressal of his grievance, however, if it was not resolved. Then his next option will be to approach court. However, there are some services which are provided by the government department but their jurisdiction does not fall with jurisdiction of civil court or district court. In that case the citizen has the only option to approach High Court. Civil court has no jurisdiction in services like passport service, arms licence. Thus if these services are denied or department are reluctant in providing these services then the citizen has to go to the High Court under Article 226 and 227 of the Indian Constitution. If the citizen is not satisfied with the decision he can appeal to the Supreme Court. Theoretically, any person whose fundamental right has been violated by the State machinery can go directly to the Supreme Court; however, there are some fundamental restrictions like time, cost, accessibility etc.

RISE OF CITIZENS CHARTERS AND PUBLIC SERVICE GUARANTEE

As we have seen above that States provides numerous government services to the citizens in their respective jurisdiction through the various government departments. Prior to 2010 no government department were accountable to the citizens for providing services within the time bound period. There were no law which could compel department officials to provide services within a specified time, which led to corruption, inordinate delay in providing services, discrimination among the powerful and weak citizens, thereby making government departments ineffective and inefficient. To curb these problems government initiated several programme to provide timely services to the citizens but these initiatives were not successful completely.

Before enacting the Public Services Guarantee Act, the Government of India proposed the creation of Citizens Charter⁵ applicable to every department. The object of Citizen Charter was to make public services accountable, creating an agreement of contract of service between the citizens and the public servants, providing for competent and time bound delivery of services, seeking personal redress if the services they received were inadequate. The public services law in India owes its origin from the Citizens Charter of UK, promulgated in 1991.

⁵ The article publish by the Government of India, "THE CITIZENS' CHARTER: INDIAN EXPERIENCE" available on <http://goicharters.nic.in/ccinitiative.htm> The Article discussed the history of citizen charter around the world and India. In a Conference of Chief Ministers of various States and Union Territories held on 24 May, 1997 in New Delhi, presided over by the Prime Minister of India, an "Action Plan for Effective and Responsive Government" at the Centre and State levels was adopted. For more detail visit <http://goicharters.nic.in/ccinitiative.htm>, last visited on 20/07/2016

The Citizens Charter is not a legal enforceable document. Its implementation was not mandatory for the departments, but was based on voluntary compliance. It was expected that the implementation of the Charter would inspire the various government sectors to adopt citizen centric approach. Initially the Charter was implemented in the banking sector in order to usher in economic reforms post-liberalization and to create a *model of excellence*.

In 2002, a website was set up by the Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG) to deal with the issues of citizens charters. Some of the departments which adopted the charters during the period of 1997-2004 are the Regional Transport Office, Hyderabad, the Jan SevaKendras in Ahmedabad and Chennai Metro Water Supply and Sewage Board. In 2005 a service excellence model of “Sevottam” was introduced at the Central and State levels to promote citizen centric administration. Subsequently in 2007 a web based portal of the Centralised Public Grievance Redress and Monitoring System (CPGRAMS) was established for helping the public lodge complaints.

In an Administrative Reforms Commission sponsored study (2008) it was observed that “Almost 41% of the Charters under consideration did not indicate any timeframe for redress of public grievances. 61% of them did not indicate any timeframe for acknowledging the receipt of public grievances and nearly 43% of them did not have the timeframe for responding to the petitioners. None of the Charters reviewed specified whether a petitioner would be conveyed the reasons for rejection of his grievance.”⁶ It was further highlighted that the charters did not provide for any imposition of penalties against the state or government officials.

In 2009 the Department of Administrative Reform and Public Grievance, came up with the Second Administrative Reforms report on Citizen Centric Administration.⁷ The Report recommended for making citizens charters effective by creating effective administrative grievance redressal mechanisms and ensuring periodic evaluation of charters. It also recommended for holding officers accountable for results. It was further suggested for suitable mechanism assuring citizens participation in administration. Based on the government initiative for good governance and the Report of the Department of Administrative Reform and Public Grievance, prepared the ground for the Public Services Guarantee Acts.

⁶Indian Institute of Public Administration, Citizen’s Charters in India: Formulation, Implementation, and Evaluation (GOI, 2008) 12

⁷Government of India Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances & Pensions Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances, Second Administrative Reforms Commission report on “CITIZEN CENTRIC ADMINISTRATION: The Heart of Governance”, available on http://arc.gov.in/arc_12th_report/arc_12th_Report.pdf, last visited on 28/07/2016

THE RIGHT OF CITIZENS FOR TIME BOUND DELIVERY OF GOODS AND SERVICES AND REDRESSAL OF THEIR GRIEVANCES BILL, 2011

The Central Government introduced bill in Lokshbha, that bill is known as “The Right of Citizens for Time Bound Delivery of Goods and Services and Redressal of their Grievances Bill 2011”. The bill empowers every individual citizen a right to time bound delivery of goods and services, and provides for a grievance redressal mechanism. The Bill mandates every public authority to publish citizens charter within six months, by specifying the various category of goods supplied and the type of services provided by it. Further the charter must include, the time within which such goods are required to be supplied or services rendered, the names and addresses of officer responsible for the delivery of goods and services. The Bill further directed that every public authority should establish an information and facilitation centre, including facilities like customer care centre, call centre, help desk and people’s support centre.

The proposed bill provided for appointment of officers as Grievance Redressal Officers (GRO) in every administrative units such as central level, state level, district level and sub district levels, municipalities, and panchayats. The designated officer would have the responsibilities to receive, enquire into and redress any complaints submitted by the citizens. All grievances are required to be redressed within a specified time frame not exceeding thirty days from the date of complaint. Further if aggrieved individual is not satisfied with such decision, he has a right to prefer an appeal to the designated authority who shall dispose of such appeal within a period of another thirty days from the date of appeal.

This bill also mandate for the creation of State Public Grievance Redressal Commissions and the Central Public Grievance Redressal Commission consisting of Chief Commissioner and other commissioners. The person aggrieved by the decision of the designated authority relating to services provided by the State Government may file an appeal to the State Public Grievance Redressal Commission and in case the service is to be delivered by the Central Government then the appeal is to be made to the Central Public Grievance Redressal Commission. The authorities have been provided the power to impose a penalty and award compensation to the complainant. The Compensation may be extended upto fifty thousand rupees and the same shall be recovered from the salary of the official against whom the penalty was imposed. In addition, if found guilty disciplinary action can be initiated against the officer by imposing punishment or penalty as determined by the disciplinary authority.

In the case of non-redressal of complaint, the burden of proof shall be upon the GRO who had denied the application request. If the appellate authorities find that the grievance complained of is part of corrupt practice, the matter shall be referred to the appropriate competent authority to

take action on such corrupt practice, under the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988. The third stage of appeal under the bill lies before the Lokpal from the decision of the Central Public Grievance Redressal Commission. If person is aggrieved with the decision of the State Public Grievance Redressal Commission an appeal may be made to the Lokayukta.

The jurisdiction of other courts is barred by the bill. In the dispute provisions for redress mechanisms, the central bill hasn't made clear provisions for imposition of penalty, and compensation. It only entrusts the appellate authorities to impose penalty including compensation, and it further provides that the appellate authority may order for payment of compensation of an amount which should not exceed the amount imposed for penalty. The norms for appointing Designated Authority remain vague under the statute. The scheme of appeal is also found to be complex at the third level, linking the aspects of anti-corruption and delivery of public services within a limited time frame.

STATE INITIATIVES TOWARDS PUBLIC SERVICES GUARANTEE

The objective behind the Right to Public Service legislations is to reduce corruption in government departments and to promote increase in transparency and accountability. Madhya Pradesh was the first state in India to enact and implement Right to Service Act on 18 August 2010. Bihar was the second state to pass this legislation on 25 July 2011. Other states like Delhi, Himachal Pradesh, Kerala, Punjab, Rajasthan, Karnataka, Uttarakhand, Haryana, Odisha, Uttar Pradesh and Jharkhand have enacted similar legislations conferring right to timely delivery of services to the citizens.

The general framework of the service delivery legislations is common across the states. The services are to be provided to the public by the designated officers within a stipulated time. The public services which are to be provided within a time frame under the legislations are to be notified through a Gazette notification. Some of the common public services under the various statutes are issuing caste, birth, marriage and domicile certificates, electric connections, voter's card, ration cards, copies of land records, etc.

If officials fail to provide the service within the given time or if the application is rejected, the aggrieved person can approach the First Appellate Authority. The First Appellate Authority, after hearing the matter, may accept or reject the appeal by specifying the reasons in writing. An appeal can be made from the order of the First Appellate Authority. The Second Appellate Authority may accept appeal or reject the same by stating the reasons through a written order and intimate the same to the applicant.

The appellate authority may order the public servant to provide the service to the applicant and may impose penalty on the designated officer for deficiency of service. The penalty amount varies from state to state ranging from Rs. 50 to Rs. 5000. The Appellate Authority may even recommend for conduct of disciplinary proceedings against the errant official. Some of the statutes also provide for payment of compensation from the penalty imposed on the officer. The appellate authorities have generally been granted the powers of a Civil Court.

The scope of the legislations is to cover all notified government departments, local authority and specified services under its preview. The Act mandates that all notified departments and authorities shall designate an officer responsible for providing the specific services and also notify the Appellate Authority and a Reviewing Officer.

If the citizen is not provided the specific service within the prescribed time period, the designated officer may be penalised for non-delivery or delay in services by the appellate authority. Some statutes also provide for cash incentives and certificates of appreciation for the Government employees who have efficiently performed their duty and no default have been reported in the financial year.

SOME OF THE COMMON FEATURE OF PUBLIC SERVICES GUARANTEE LEGISLATIONS

Departments and Services Covered

The statute specifies the departments and the various services which are to be provided to the citizens. The statutory notifications are revised from time to time, and the number of services and the concerned departments are updated regularly. The list of services often includes some of the basic citizen-centric services such as issuing of ration cards, water connections, death certificates, driving licences, electricity connections, mark sheets, attestations etc. The delivery of services is often dependent on a number of factors including the demand from the citizens, willingness of the departments or their level of efficiency.

Time Period

The statutes provide specific time period within which each of the services are required to be provided. The stipulated time frame differs from State to State. Some of the concerned factors are the nature of the service provided, the number of applications etc. The time period of service delivery is measured from the time when an application is submitted to designated officer and the issuance of an acknowledgment receipt. For example the time taken to register the name of a

new born child in Jammu and Kashmir is a maximum of 7 days after the submission of the application of a birth certificate. Similarly in Punjab the Housing and Urban Development Department must sanction Building Plans/Revised Building Plans of a residential place within 30 days of receipt of the application.

Nodal Department

The nodal department is a department who has been assigned by the State government to be in-charge of implementation of the legislation. The nodal department differs from state to state. Some of the nodal departments are Department of Personnel and Administrative Reforms, Department of Home, Department of E-Governance, Department of Revenue etc.

Appeals

The appellate mechanism under the statute has been differently provided in the different states. Every State has prescribed different procedures for appeal, number of appeals, implementing procedures etc. For example in Madhya Pradesh if the application is rejected by the designated officer then the applicant can file an appeal within 30 days from the date of rejection. Similarly if the same is again rejected by the First Appellate Officer then the applicant can make a further appeal to the Second Appellant Authority within a period of 60 days. Similar procedures have been followed in Bihar, UP and Rajasthan. On the other hand in Punjab and Uttarakhand the statutes have provided for three rounds of appeal, with the final appeal being made to the special commission constituted under the statute.

Penalty

The various statutes have also provided for payment of compensation and imposition of penalty on the government officials for default in delivery of services in accordance with the statute. The penalty amount in a large number states like Madhya Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Delhi, Jammu & Kashmir, Bihar, Rajasthan, Punjab, Jharkhand, Kerala and Orissa is Rs. 250 per day, with the total amount not exceeding Rs. 5000, whereas in Delhi and Karnataka the penalty is a paltry sum of Rs. 10 and Rs. 20 per day respectively. However in most of the statutes the upper limit of the penalty has been prescribed.

Bar of Jurisdiction

The most public services guarantee Act bar the jurisdiction of the civil court and other tribunals. For example in Himachal Pradesh Public Services Guarantee Act Sec 10, Karnataka SAKALA

Act Sec 18, Maharashtra Public Services Guarantee Act Sec 26, The Goa (Right of Citizens to time-Bound Delivery of Public Services) Sec 29, Punjab Public Services Guarantee Act Sec 20, Gujarat Public Services Guarantee Act, Sec 25 etc. It should be noted that the bar of jurisdiction prohibits multiplicity of litigation, but absence of adequate appellate commissions often compels the citizens to approach the High Court of Judicature.

IMPLEMENTATIONS AND WORKING OF THE PUBLIC SERVICES GUARANTEE

The implementation of the Public Services Guarantee Acts is done by the State government through the nodal departments. If we see the actual implementation of the public services guarantee Act we find that the services provided under the stipulated time are to be provided by the same departments which were providing them before the enactment of the Public Services Guarantee Act. The primary change brought by the legislation is notification of services, and appointment of designated officer and appellate officer.

There are some states that have also constituted Right to Services Commission, such as Punjab and Bihar but most of the state has not constituted the Services Commission. The Commission includes one judicial member and other member. When one person applies under the public services guarantee for any notified services and in case of denial has to make an appeal in the nature of an administrative grievance. However if both appeals fail, then the person has the only remedy to approach the High Court, but approaching the High Court is prohibitive for many. The advantage of the Commission is that the aggrieved person may appeal by making simple application to an independent quasi-judicial authority having implementation power.

A study of the various state legislations clearly indicates the growing importance of the right to timely delivery of public services in the lives of citizens, but it is equally important that conscious efforts should be made to identify the best practices and evolve a set of common practices so that citizens across the country enjoy their constitutionally guaranteed rights of citizenships equally without any discrimination.

CONCLUSION

The right to timely delivery of public services is the need of the day but the success of achieving citizen centric administration can only be achieved through better implementation and creating in built mechanisms of accountability. In various governments the presence of middlemen extracting money from hapless citizens, government clerks demanding money for processing the application, non-issuance of receipts of acknowledgment are indicative of the administrative

abuse of power. It is necessary that the Central Government should enact the right to public services guarantee act at the central level under the jurisdiction of the Lokpal and the various State Governments should make conscious efforts in improving delivery mechanisms under the statute by making government officials more accountable and mutually learning from the working experiences of other states.