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Citizen's Charter and Its Effectiveness: A Case Study of Department of Immigration and Passports of Bangladesh

Farhana Razzaque

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Farhana Razzaque¹

Abstract

Bangladeshi bureaucracy with its British colonial legacy is often considered to be a closed system which has a tendency to resist changes. The country's public service delivery mechanism, historically, has been less than effective in serving the interest of the common people. After independence in 1971, the successive governments in Bangladesh have embarked upon a number of administrative reforms aiming at making the public service delivery more efficient, effective and pro-people. The Citizen's Charter initiative is one of those, which was introduced in 2007 with the stated goal of providing the citizens with high quality services within the ambit of transparency, responsiveness and accountability. This paper examines the effectiveness of the Citizen's Charter program in public organizations and the cultural compatibility of Bangladesh civil service towards that change—particularly focusing on the Department of Immigration and Passports (DIP). In this pursuit the study explores and analyzes the various factors that determine the effectiveness of the Citizen's Charter program in public organizations. Reviewing the relevant literature the author conducted field study interviewing both the service providers and service recipients at DIP. The study acknowledges that theoretically the introduction of Citizen's Charter is a positive step towards a transparent and accountable public service delivery. However, research findings reveal that though the Charter has had some positive impact on the demand side of public service delivery, there is hardly any effect on supply side, owing to public servants lack of empathy towards clients' needs and demands. The reasons are manifold. The co-existence of dual authorities affects the performance of DIP thereby influencing the service deliveries. Employees at DIP perform within a 'top-down' or rigid decision making culture which is often disowned by the frontline staffs resulting in their low enthusiasm and ownership of the core values of Citizen's Charter. The dearth of human capital is also a barrier to provide better services. While the paper has limitations to draw a gross conclusion that the state of service delivery in other public sector entities reflects a similar outcome than that of DIP, anecdotal evidence suggests that the introduction of Citizen's Charter has not made much dent in overall public service delivery. The paper concludes with some suggestions to make the Citizen's Charter effective and thus improving the governance quality.

¹Farhana Razzaque is a Research Associate with the Institute of Governance Studies, BRAC University. The author is grateful to Dr. Rizwan Khair for inspiring her to carry out this research. She is also thankful to M. Shahidul Islam and Sultan Mohammed Zakaria for their helpful comments.

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List of Abbreviations

BCS	Bangladesh Civil Service
CG	Caretaker Government
CSCMP	Civil Service Change Management Program
DARPG	Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances in Government of India
DIP	Department of Immigration and Passports
GoB	Government of Bangladesh
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
MRP	Machine Readable Passports
NPM	New Public Management
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
PARC	Public Administration Reform Commission
PRO	Public Relation Officers
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
RPOD	Regional Passport Office in the capital city Dhaka
RPOJ	Regional Passport Office in the district of Jessore
SB	Special Branch of Police
TIB	Transparency International Bangladesh
TQM	Total Quality Management
UK	United Kingdom
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
WB	World Bank

I. Introduction

Every government wants to gain trust and seek support from its citizens by delivering effective public services. To achieve that, respective governments take various initiatives to bring about changes within their existing traditional and process-oriented administrative systems. In recent times, market-based assumptions, principles and structures are increasingly becoming influential in theory and practice of public governance. These are often collectively referred to as New Public Management² (NPM). In fact, as a management philosophy, NPM emphasises upon hands-on professional management, explicit standards, measures of performance and value for money. The last and most important addition to this list is responsiveness to the needs of customers *i.e.*, citizens (Rhodes 1996). Various scholars contend that traditional administrative system is ineffective, insensitive, inefficient, and often hostile to people whom they claim to serve (Osborne and Plastrik 1997; Rhodes 1997; Peters 1996; Osborne and Gaebler 1992; Hood 1991; Pollitt 1991 cited in Beniwal 2005).

Due to their adherence to traditional and process-oriented administrative systems, governments of different countries have long been suffering from demoralized employees, poor service quality, ineffectiveness and inefficient bureaucracy. For poor service deliveries, many public sector organizations serving citizens in areas such as health, education, waste management etc. in different countries have been increasingly losing citizens' trust and satisfaction, subsequently affecting not only the position of a particular government but also the politico-economic scenario of a country. Therefore, governments have been looking for a customer-oriented strategy to improve their service quality to achieve citizens' trust and satisfaction. Beniwal (2005, p.2) opines that 'the fast growing bureaucracy followed by increasing degree of dissatisfaction among citizens and fiscal crises have led to the search for a model of governance which not only promotes efficiency and economy in administration but also treats service delivery to the satisfaction of its user as the central concern'. The Citizen's Charter of the United Kingdom (UK) was the culmination of such a search effort. The Charter is a written document of an organization through which an organization makes a commitment to its clients regarding standard of services, information, choice and consultation, non-discrimination and accessibility,

² New Public Management is a management philosophy used by governments throughout the world since the 1980s in order to make the public sector efficient and cost effective.

grievances redress, courtesy and value for money. The Citizen's Charter movement is considered as a landmark shift in thinking about how public services should be delivered to citizens by protecting the interests and perspectives of service recipients by giving much greater prominence to needs of service seekers.

The idea behind the introduction of Citizen's Charter was the notion developed in the last decade of the twentieth century that service providers (governments) need to satisfy their customers by improving the quality of administrative performance at the point of contact where public administration and the public meet (OECD³ 2000b cited in Torres 2006, p.159). Citizen's Charter, as a tool of NPM, endeavours to improve the quality⁴ of public service delivery⁵. As an NPM strategy, Citizen's Charter fosters responsiveness, promptness, transparency, accountability, accessibility and openness, thereby ensuring quality and standards of public service delivery (Prior 1995; Willett 1996; Falconer and Ross 1999; Drewry 2005; Haque 2005; Torres 2006).

Influenced by the global changes in public sector, the idea of Citizen's Charter was put forward in Bangladesh by the Public Administration Reforms Commission (PARC) Report of 2000. However, it was only in 2007 that the then Caretaker Government⁶ (CG) took the initiative to introduce Citizen's Charter in Bangladesh. However, the country that inherited a civil service system (from the British to Pakistani rule) has observed only a few cosmetic changes since its independence in 1971. In this backdrop, it is crucial to know to what extent the Citizen's Charter is capable to bring about changes in the public services and whether it will bring about any drastic change within the service delivery mechanism. Also, to what extent is the Citizen's Charter programme capable of making the administration citizen-friendly? Are the tax payers, being clients of public service, getting high quality service from the office? Will an effective Citizen's Charter program ever be a 'Reality' in Bangladesh or is it going to remain 'Rhetoric' only?

³ OECD stands for Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development

⁴ Haywood- Farmer (1990 p.3) as cited by Lovell (1992) defines quality as, 'services that meet customer preferences and expectations.'

⁵ 'Public Service Delivery is a set of institutional arrangements adopted by the government to provide public goods and services to its citizens. Public services delivery has been one of the key functions of the public sector which uses civil service bureaucracies as the instrument for the delivery of services' (World Development Report, 2004 cited in Tamrakar 2010).

⁶ In the parlance of institutional government, a caretaker government is one which normally takes care of state administration for an interim period until the regular new government is formed (www.banglapedia.org).

Against this backdrop, the purpose of this study is to explore and analyze the effectiveness of Citizen's Charter program in Bangladesh. The rest of the paper is organized as follows. In section II the paper briefly discusses the introduction of the Citizens' Charter in the context of the trajectory of public service reform and the state of public service delivery in Bangladesh. The origin of Citizen's Charter and its conceptual framework are analysed in section III. The section also shares experience of a number of countries' Citizen's Charter. The elements of Citizen's Charter, its aim and applications in the context of Bangladesh are the major focus of section IV. The section also contextualizes the case study on the application of Citizen's Charter in the Department of Immigration and Passports (DIP) of Bangladesh. Section V briefly discusses the study methodology. The factors behind the ineffectiveness of Citizen's Charter in DIP are analyzed in section VI. Explaining the less than expected outcome of the Charter, the author briefly introduced the attributes and components of second generation Citizen's Charter that was launched in 2009 aiming at better public service delivery. The final section concludes.

II. Public Service Delivery, Reform Experience and the Introduction of Citizen's Charter in Bangladesh

According to the Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh "all powers in the Republic belong to the people" and "every person in the service of the Republic has a duty to strive at all times to serve the people" (Khan 2008). The Government of Bangladesh (GoB) has nearly one million (UNDP⁷ 2007) personnel responsible for managing its Public Service. In Bangladesh the bureaucracy with its British colonial legacy is often perceived as less apathetic to the needs of the people and even unwilling to listen to them. It tends to resist change and reluctant to accept new ideas and innovation. Citizens, on the other hand, are increasingly dissatisfied with the poor service delivery quality of the government offices. Common people have to wait for a long time in the public offices to get a small, simple or petty clerical job done. They face many difficulties (in terms of demands for bribes, lobbying by influential people etc.) to get their job done by the public employees. It is a common picture of many public offices in Bangladesh. Zafarullah and Siddiquee (2001), for instance, noted that the public sector of Bangladesh not only rides with various dimensions of corruption such as bribery, rent-seeking and misappropriation of funds, but also the performance of public organization is adversely

⁷ UNDP stands for United Nations Development Programme

affected by excessive lobbying, delays in service provision, pilferage and larceny, irresponsible conduct of officials, bureaucratic intemperance, patronage and clientelism. According to UNDP (2007), while trying to receive public services, people experience unnecessary harassment, discourteous behaviour of the civil servants who keep customers waiting for hours before attending to their needs. The members of the civil service are, by and large, unwilling to correct mistakes, learn new approaches and often make unabashed approaches for pecuniary benefits.

To bring about changes in the rigid nature of the bureaucratic system and regain people's trust, the GoB has been trying to introduce new techniques and tools in government offices for the last few decades. Since independence in 1971, the Government constituted about 17 Reform Commissions and Committees with a view to reorganize and reform civil service and public sector in order to transform the public service delivery. Though there have been efforts by successive governments to bring reforms in the public sector, nothing substantial have been achieved mainly due to lack of political will, bureaucratic resistance and lack of demands from citizens. Even the last major reform initiative, the PARC Report of 2000, has remained largely unimplemented (Azizuddin 2011). Thus, despite significant efforts, the Bangladesh Civil Service⁸ (BCS) is still largely entrapped in traditional concepts of public administration and civil service (UNDP 2007). In recent years, some strategic inventions have been taken by GoB for breaking the traditional way of service delivery system and generating modern ways of delivering public services. It was only during the last Caretaker regime in the country, while trying to act on some of the reform proposals of PARC, that the idea of Citizen's Charter was introduced in 2007. In this regard, the introduction of Citizen's Charter is considered as a way forward for an appropriate change initiative by the GoB. The Government introduced Citizen's Charter in 2007 in all of its departments and organizations with the stated goal of providing the citizens with high quality service remaining within the ambit of transparency, responsiveness and accountability. Through this administrative reform⁹ initiative, the GoB also wanted to provide more user-friendly public services through improvement in performance of its public officials. It was thought that the introduction of tools such a Citizen's Charter would help to bring about

⁸ Bangladesh Civil Service is the elite civil service of the Government of Bangladesh.

⁹ Reforms in this context means 'those efforts which call for or lead to major changes in the bureaucratic system of a country intended to transform the existing and established practices, behaviors and structures within it' (Khan1980, p.57).

accountability and transparency in administration and reduce harassment of the clients while seeking services in such departments and bodies [The Daily Star¹⁰ 2008 (online edition)].

At present approximately 80 percent of public offices display their Citizen's Charters as a condition set by the government (JICA¹¹ 2009). Nevertheless, in spite of such an initiative, many common public service seekers are still unaware of it and many of them have become the victim of middlemen due to lack of adequate publicly accessible information regarding service processes and procedures. Though it was expected that the Citizen's Charter would improve the old bureaucratic service delivery mechanism, currently people are not getting any real benefit from the initiative (JICA 2009). Considering these issues and realities, it is worth considering whether the Citizen's Charter program is really effective in transforming public organizations into more customer-oriented ones or whether public agencies are carrying on business as usual. Before looking in-depth about the Citizen's Charter program in Bangladesh, it is pertinent to discuss briefly what the concept Citizen's Charter means, what are its principles and to give a brief overview of Citizen's Charter and its practice across the globe.

III. Concept of Citizen's Charter

Citizen's Charter is a document through which an organization makes a commitment to its clients regarding standard of services, information, choice and consultation, non-discrimination and accessibility, grievances redress, courtesy and value for money. This also includes expectations of the organization from the citizens/clients for fulfilling the commitment of the organization. In essence, Citizen's Charter is an instrument of an organization through which the organization can provide and improve its product or service on the basis of its clients' demands and expectations. Sharma (2004) emphasizes that the Citizen's Charter usually 'indicates the rights and services available to the citizens, procedures, how these will be delivered, remedy that will be available in case of non-deliverance and obligations of citizens in return' (cited in Haque 2005, p.397).

¹⁰ The Daily Star is the highest circulating English daily newspaper in Bangladesh.

¹¹ JICA stands for Japan International Cooperation Agency.

Citizen's Charter is an effort made by public organizations to inform its clients/users of their service types, standards, time frame of receiving particular service and introduce a complain procedure to let the users complain if service is not provided according to the stipulated time without any real explanation (Ohemeng 2010, p.118). Basically, charter is an instrument of organization through which it can provide and improve its product or service on the basis of its clients' demand and expectation. A Citizen Charter essentially consists of the 3 Cs:¹²

- i. Customer-driven service standards: Service is provided according to the need of customers.
- ii. Communication: Easy accessibility of customers to the service centres—especially the location where receivers meet the service providers (e.g., reception desks, website, etc.).
- iii. Control: Control over activities, process, rules and regulations to produce better output.

1. Principles of Citizen's Charter

According to Citizen's Charter, the public service provision should adhere to the following six principles.

i. Standards

A Citizen's Charter contains clear and unambiguous terms, conditions, deliverables, payables, and turn-around-times of specific service(s) that is supposed to be delivered to the customers. Together, these could be described as standards, which are universally applicable for all citizens. All Citizen's Charters, according to Nikos, 'are public documents setting out standards of service to which the customers are entitled' (Nikos 2000, p. 41 cited in Haque 2005, p.392).

ii. Information and openness

The Charters should contain full and accurate information in plain language. It should also inform clients the extent to which the services are available, who is responsible for the delivery of a particular piece of service, the opening hours for the specific service, and the procedures of complaining if promised service standards are not met. Handbooks, guides, posters, websites, etc. are used to provide information to citizens.

¹² Available at: www.vakokybe.lt/get.php?f.12 [Accesses on 20 March 2010]

iii. Choice and consultation

The Charter provides choice of services to users wherever practicable. In this regard in his work on contract compliance and public audit as regulatory strategies in the public sector, McEldowney (1996) rightly says, 'Charter appears as an attempt of empowering the citizen through Charter rights.' This written document introduces and facilitates regular and systematic consultation to the users of the service to fix service standards and to ascertain quality of service delivery. This helps correct the past mistakes and improves the future quality of the service.¹³

iv. Courtesy and helpfulness

Citizen's Charter defines the behavioural pattern of public servants. It challenges public servants to behave more sensibly and sensitively towards building clients' confidence. The Citizen's Charter may then become a guideline for public servants to deal with their customers when it comes to information supply and service delivery.

v. Grievance redressal and complaints handling

Haque (2005, p.392) describes that some scholars such as Nikos (2000) and Torres (2003) view Citizen's Charter as a new contract between the state and the citizens. Through Citizen's Charter, the government specifies the rights and obligations of customers in relation with public officials. To others (Drewry 2005; Haque 2005), it is a form of social contract through which service recipients can hold service providers accountable for their actions or lack of service thereof.

vi. Value for Money

Citizen's Charter advocates ensuring actual value to taxpayers' money through delivery of effective and efficient public services to the citizens. In fact, payers of service fees should get much more in return than the money paid because a public service seeker is, in most cases, also a tax payer.

All these principles of Citizen's Charter help public organizations to deliver service within time, make the service process transparent and hold public servants accountable to their customers, and hence facilitate efficiency and effectiveness within public organizations and subsequently improve the quality of public service delivery. By giving a very clear-cut, well-defined agreed

¹³ Available at: <http://www.sasanet.org/documents/Tools/Citizen%27s%20Charters.pdf> [accesses on 4 April 2010]

Citizen's Charter, it helps the clients to get that quality. In his work on contract compliance and public audit as regulatory strategies in the public sector McEldowney (1996) says, 'Charter is intended to encourage quality in services.' From the above discussion, it may be argued that exercise of CC in organizations improves the following organizational matters: standardization of service, information, accessibility, participation, non-discrimination, accountability, transparency, reliability and the grievance redress mechanism.

2. Citizen's Charter in International Context

Historically, Citizen's Charter started in the UK in 1991 as a ten year program with the aim of improving the delivery of public services. After the success of Citizen's Charter program in the UK, it became the source of inspiration for many governments and became a reform strategy in different countries. The progress of Citizen's Charter in the UK set a milestone for others and many countries have launched charter initiatives to make the public sector more responsive, transparent, efficient, effective and accountable to the citizens. Sharma and Agnihotri (2001, p.734) claim that some of these initiatives are very similar to the UK model, while others chart new ground by leaning on the service quality paradigm of the Total Quality Management (TQM) movement. Other initiatives are pitched somewhere in between. In some countries, part of the underlying message of Citizen's Charter has been to promote the empowerment of citizens by raising their critical awareness of the quality of services and, (in theory at least), by letting those who are dissatisfied seek out other providers (Drewry 2005). Following the UK initiative many other countries picked up the idea and initiated such tools to better serve the public. In Europe, France introduced its "*The Public Service Charter /La Charte des Services Publics*" in 1992; followed by Belgium in 1992 by its "*The Charter for Public Service Users (La Charte des Utilisateurs des Services Publics)*"; Italy initially launched its "*Service Charter /Carta dei Servizi*" in 1993 and it was re-launched in 1995; and Finland started its "*Service Charter*" in 1997. Outside Europe, Canada picked up the concept and introduced its "*Service Standards Initiative*" in 1995, while in Australia it came up the "*Service Charter*" in 1997. In our region, Malaysia under the reform initiative of Mahathir Mohamad, the then Prime Minister of Malaysia, came up with its "*Client's Charter*" as early as 1993, while our neighbour, India, introduced "*Citizen's Charter*", in 1997. Many other countries also followed this trend and initiated similar tools.

Among them, we will discuss in more details the charters in the UK and in India.

2.1 Citizen Charter Initiative in UK

In the UK, during the early 1980s, the Thatcher Government started realizing that day-by-day the public service of the state was becoming more expensive, but less efficient as well as less responsive. In order to cut the unnecessary public expenditure and to transform the inherently inefficient bureaucracy into efficient and effective system, the government started to emphasize on the retrenchment along with the improvement of the efficiency of public sector. These led to some public sector reforms such as the Financial Management Initiative, performance indicators and privatization. All these reforms fostered the recognition of the importance of individual service recipient, and subsequently resulted in the Citizen's Charter initiative (Connolly *et al.* 1994, p.23-24). John Major's¹⁴ Citizen's Charter becomes a good example of user-focused approach, which is based on the idea of extending the market logic of consumer sovereignty to public services provision (James *et al.* 2005; McGuire 2001; Taylor 1999). The Thatcher Government published its Citizen's Charter in 1991 and later, in 1998, it was re-introduced by the new Labour government of Tony Blair as "*Services First*". To improve service quality and provide better services to the citizens, John Major's government originally set out six major principles which were later elaborated into nine principles by 1998's Labour government that included (i) set standards of service, (ii) be open and provide full information, (iii) consult and involve, (iv) encourage access and the promotion of choice, (v) treat all fairly, (vi) put things right when they go wrong, (vii) use resources effectively, (viii) innovate and improve and (ix) work with other providers.¹⁵

2.2 Citizen's Charter Initiative in India

The impressive achievement of the Citizen's Charter in the UK has made this administrative tool popular across the world and India was no exception to this trend (Ghuman 2002 cited in Beniwal 2005, p.3). The decision to introduce Citizen's Charter in India was first made at a conference of Chief Ministers that took place in New Delhi on May 24, 1997 (Government of India, DAR&PG¹⁶ 1997). On 24th May, 1997, an accountable and citizen-friendly perspective to

¹⁴ The Citizen's Charter was first launched during the tenure of Prime Minister John Major in 1991.

¹⁵ Available at: <http://goicharters.nic.in/ccinitiative.htm> [Accessed 30 May 2010]

¹⁶ DAR&PG stands for Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances in Government of India

administration was adopted in India, and this has been promised through a mechanism of: (a) citizen's charter; (b) decentralization of power; (c) speedy redressal of public grievances; and (d) review of laws, Acts and regulations. Till January 2011, as many 131 as Citizen's Charter had been formulated by the Central Government Ministries/ Departments/ Organizations and 729 Charters by 24 State Governments/ Union Territories¹⁷. In India, the DAR&PG of the Union Government is coordinating the formulation, operationalization and evaluation of the Citizen's Charters of the Union Ministries/Departments and other Central Government organizations.

IV. Citizen's Charter Initiative in Bangladesh

Bangladesh embarked on the administrative reform initiative shortly after its independence and since then the Government of Bangladesh has effectively introduced different reform mechanisms to make its public service delivery more efficient and effective. As indicated earlier, the government has so far constituted 17 Reform Commissions or Committees with a view to reorganizing/reforming civil service and public sector. More than 20 reports on Public Administration Reform have been prepared by these Commissions and Committees and some of those reports were prepared at the initiative of development partners/ donors, particularly the World Bank, United Nations Development Programme, Asian Development Bank, Department for International Development, and United States Agency for International Development (UNDP 2007). The clamour for radical change in public administration was basically raised in the early 1980s by these international donor agencies as part of structural adjustment programs (Sarker 2006, P.187). However, of these 20 reports, Sarker (2006) opines that the recommendations of these committees and commissions did not reflect the true spirit of New Public Management. In 1997, the then elected government headed by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina constituted another commission—the Public Administration Reform Commission, which was mandated to recommend policies, programs and activities to improve the level of efficiency, effectiveness, accountability and transparency in public organizations (*ibid* 2006). It submitted its report in June 2000 with some solid recommendations based on NPM strategy. The suggestion for introducing Citizen's Charter in three ministries and five important institutions (Jahan 2006) was one of them. Later the importance of introducing Citizen's Charter in public sector was

¹⁷ Available at: <http://goicharters.nic.in/charter.htm> & <http://goicharters.nic.in/charter-state.htm> [accessed on 8 April 2012]

emphasized in Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) 2005. Finally, on 8th May, 2007, the Citizen's Charter initiative was adopted during the rule of the then Caretaker Government. It was declared by the Government that every ministry, divisions, wings and attached departments will formulate and publish their Citizen's Charter in office premises and websites as a tool of enhancing public service quality and ensuring good governance as a whole. In line with the instruction of both the Cabinet Division and the Ministry of Establishment, all Ministries, Divisional and Deputy Commissioners' Offices, all departments developed and published their respective Citizen's Charters. In 2008 it was appended in the GoB's Secretariat Instruction (Instruction No. 173).¹⁸

1. Elements of Citizen's Charter of Government Offices in Bangladesh

The Secretariat Instruction, 2008, of Bangladesh has given instruction to formulate and publish Citizen's Charter. The instruction has set six principles to be incorporated in the Citizen's Charters, which are as follows:

1. Setting measurable standard for service delivery.
2. Flashing service deliverer's identity, cost of service delivery and time frame.
3. Giving opportunity to choose alternative services.
4. Ensuring courtesy including offering apology for mistake and failure.
5. Giving scope to complaint and provision for corrective measure.
6. Ensuring value for money (*i.e.*, all citizens will be given equal treatment and the value or service rendered shall be more than the fees to be paid for that service).

Figure 1 below illustrates the six major features *i.e.*, (i) transparency, (ii) option for choice, (iii) courtesy, (iv) complaint mechanism, (v) equality and value for money, and (vi) specific standardization of Citizen's Charter of Bangladesh.

¹⁸ Secretariat Instructions procedures for the transaction of governmental business circulated among the state functionaries in an officially compiled document.
Available at: http://www.banglapedia.org/httpdocs/HT/S_0173.HTM [Accessed on 8 June 2011]

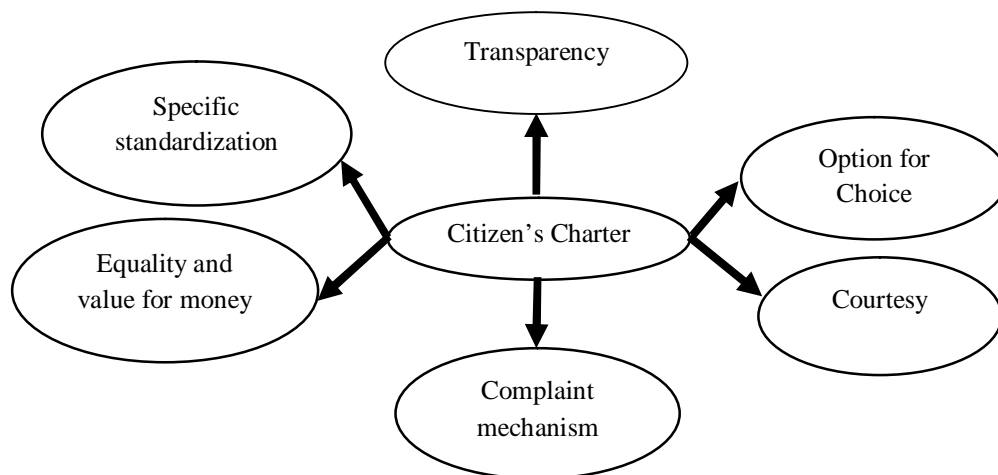


Figure 1: Elements of Citizen's Charter in government offices of Bangladesh

2. Aims of Citizen's Charter Program in Bangladesh

The main purpose of introducing Citizen's Charter in Bangladesh was to make the public servants more accountable, transparent, responsive and people-friendly. Introduction of Citizen's Charter is also aimed at bringing about changes within the service delivery mechanism by the introduction of service choices, a culture of consultation, and practicing the essential mechanism of redressing public grievances. According to the proponents of Citizen's Charter, it will reduce the harassment of the people and make the people aware of their rights by disseminating information about the process and privilege of obtaining public services in Bangladesh. It is believed that, if Citizen's Charter enables fulfilment of all these objectives, it will certainly bring satisfaction among the public service recipients in Bangladesh. The present study intends to focus on the effectiveness of these features in the service delivery of Department of Immigration and Passports (DIP) of Bangladesh.

3. A Case of Department of Immigration and Passports

'The passport¹⁹ service in Bangladesh, according to public perception, is replete with corruption and irregularities rendering poor services to the citizens. Brokers are largely responsible for bringing corruption to this office. Field study findings reveal that for facilitating an easy and smooth delivery of passport, each applicant hands out equivalent to USD 11-21 to the broker(s).

¹⁹ "A passport is an official document issued in the name of the head of State, to a traveler for his safe passage to and protection in a foreign country and is intended to be presented to a foreign Government for this purpose" (Mohsin, 2009).

In a survey carried out among 624 passport applicants in the Dhaka office, it was found that only 61.2 percent applicants received their passports on time (Alam and Rahman 2006, p.27). Besides this, there are a lot of problems associated with the DIP services. Some of these problems are: ‘the complexities of the process, waiting in long queues for application dropping and passport receiving, harassment by brokers, delay in passport delivery and police verification and forgeries of attestation’ (*ibid* 2006). To overcome these problems and make the administration more accountable, transparent and customer-oriented, following the government initiative in Bangladesh, DIP introduced Citizen’s Charter in 2007 in line with the instructions of the government.

It was found that even after nearly four years after introduction of Citizen’s Charter in DIP, problems such as corruption, complex process of service, and shortage of manpower in DIP still exist, which create barriers to deliver quality service to its clients. Evidence shows that clients of DIP are not yet free from different types of harassments *e.g.*, brokers’ trap, spending extra money for getting passport, harassment by Special Branch (SB) of Police, etc. (*The Daily Prothom Alo*²⁰ 2010). At DIP, ‘brokers try to create a sense of feeling that if a service recipient comes in a contract with him/her (broker), s/he will get the service in time without facing any harassment.’ As most of the general people have experience of not getting passports in due time by following due process, most of the time, uneducated and sometimes educated clients, also accept brokers’ offer for saving their time and spend extra money for getting passports in time. Some studies have also discovered involvement of some corrupt officials in episodes of harassment at the DIP (Monem and Benjamin 2009; *The Daily Prothom Alo* 2010). According to Monem and Benjamin (2009), the unholy nexus between officials and brokers makes the system ineffective leaving no room for the consumers for justice or remedy. Thus, a service seeking citizen in such an environment becomes helpless. Noticeably, under such circumstances, Citizen’s Charter can play very little role in providing satisfactory services. The above scenarios depicts that the clients of DIP do not get quality service and they have to face lots of hurdles for getting service, *i.e.* passport. Though it had been expected that Citizen’s Charter would improve the old bureaucratic service delivery mechanism, currently, the people are not getting output out of the Citizen’s Charter program (JICA 2009).

²⁰ The Daily Prothom Alo is a most popular Bangla daily news paper in Bangladesh.

Considering all conditions, it may come into one's mind as to whether the Citizen's Charter program is really effective in making DIP a more customer oriented public service delivery organization in the name of improving service quality and how this Citizen's Charter contributes most effectively in delivering better public services to citizens.

V. Methods of Inquiry

A mixed approach was taken for conducting the research. Both open and close-ended (with predetermined options) questionnaires were used to collect information. In the study, there is also a combination of qualitative and quantitative approach to collect, analyze and interpret the data. However, quantitative data analysis was used particularly for measuring the dependent variable of the study. Such qualitative approach helped understand how different factors such as organizational culture and human resources affect the success of Citizen's Charter program in DIP by conducting survey and observation on service providers as well as service seekers and/or service receivers in an unaltered natural setting. In the qualitative approach, open-ended questions are considered critical since it helps researchers see the reality through the respondents' personal comments and remarks and points of view. The responses of the employees of DIP helped get the picture of how the Citizen's Charter is working within office jurisdiction, what status of the Citizen's Charter program is enjoying in their office currently, the service provision of the government office. In addition, qualitative data was helpful to structure the thoughts on how cultural compatibility of DIP affects the Citizen's Charter program and sort out some crucial factors regarding human resource that play prominent role in operating the Citizen's Charter program effectively in DIP. To justify the research questions, data and information from both primary and secondary sources have been collected using interview, observation and documentation data collection techniques.

1. Sampling and Sample Size

Participants of the study comprised of 52 people from three categories of respondents: 40 were the users of DIP, 11 were service providers and one was expert on the relevant field. Service providers were selected according to the organogram and hierarchical order of DIP, working experience of the employees, attachment with the process of formulation of Citizen's Charter policies, and the willingness to provide response to the research study. In addition to the service

providers and service recipients, a respondent with expertise and knowledge in the area was purposely selected to provide consultative information for this research.

VI. Scenario of Citizen's Charter in DIP of Bangladesh

1. Service Quality

The findings of this study reveal that due to coexistence of dual authority in the process of issuing passports, i.e. Special Branch of Police (SB of Police) and DIP and lethargy of SB in issuing *SB Report*²¹, the performance of DIP is unduly seen as unsatisfactory judged against timeliness quality of service deliveries. Whereas the GoB has made the *SB Report* mandatory for obtaining a passport, the DIP officials are neither willing nor can they coordinate with the SB of Police even if the passport preparation and its ultimate delivery to customer is delayed.

Further on timeliness, some employees of DIP mentioned that lack of manpower and technical support (computer and computer expert in keeping data as soft copy) are also important causes of this performance gap. The researcher also found that the existing practice of lobbying, bribing, nepotism and favouritism at DIP are, in fact, negative contributions of the lack of on time delivery of services in the organization.

In brief, lack of coordination between DIP and SB of Police resulting in procedural complexity, shortage of manpower, lack of automation, and malpractices are major factors contributing negatively to the on time delivery of DIP services.

Though returning the value for clients' money in terms of delivering effective and efficient service is, in theory, central to the idea of Citizen's Charter, the findings indicate that unfortunately most of the respondents (service recipients) had to face extra hassles (i.e., wasting extra time or money) for receiving their passports. It can be argued that corruption, lethargy and malpractice still exist in DIP. From the findings of the current study it may be claimed that in DIP, the Citizen's Charter program has still not been successful in weeding out unnecessary rules, procedures, and red-tape from organizational procedures. Therefore, for ordinary citizens seeking services from DIP, it is tantamount to hassles, harassment, annoyance and irritation.

²¹ The Special Branch of police has to carry out investigation of the applicants at both permanent and present addresses and sends back to the passport office with a recommendation to issue/not issue the passport.

On cost-effectiveness of the services, this study found that most of the service seekers consider the service of DIP less cost-effective as they experience various harassments during getting services. Even after paying the required fees for passport, people are not getting the minimum expected services from present passport delivery system (The Financial Express²² 2007). Issuance of 'SB Report' by the SB of Police is the worst example of clients' harassment in DIP, because almost all new service-seekers of DIP have to give bribes to SB of Police for issuing the report. While there is no fixed turnaround time for the *SB Report*, passport seekers are usually in need of the quickest possible delivery of the passport. As they wish to 'expedite' a 'clean' *SB Report*, they therefore, have to spend some speed money to 'please' the assigned police officer for a 'favorable' SB report at the earliest possible time. This malpractice diminishes the cost-effectiveness of the DIP services. Thus the process of obtaining '*SB Report*' is considered as complex, exhaustive, and time-consuming for the service seekers.

During the field survey the researcher observed some crucial events regarding citizen's access to officials. The researcher found that less-educated people face difficulties in getting access to concerned DIP officials. On the other hand, it was also found that some people get easy access to the higher authority as they are somehow known (relatives, friends, friends of friends, etc.) to the officials.

However, it may be argued that following the introduction of Citizen's Charter at DIP in 2007, it has become easy and possible for most of the clients to process their application by themselves. Seventy percentage of respondents remarked that availability of information is helpful in protecting them from being deceived. It has also reduced harassments from the middlemen. It not only helped the applicants to know about rules and procedures of the DIP, but also made them aware of their rights. Moreover, the information provided in Citizen's Charter about cost of service, delivery time of service, and necessary information about how to apply for specific services makes the public administrative system more transparent to the citizens. The findings of this study point to the fact that Citizen's Charter is useful in empowering the public and helpful in forging better relationships with the officials. Therefore, it can be said that the available

²² The Financial Express, the only English financial daily in Bangladesh

information regarding application processing for passport has made the process easy and hassle free for the clients of DIP.

The researcher, however, noticed that Citizen's Charter of DIP contains minimum information regarding grievance mechanism and its Dhaka office does not even have a specific designated place where customers could find explanations to their queries or could get help if service was not satisfactory. As a result, clients of DIP cannot file any formal complaints if services are poor and unacceptable. Needless to say, improving the service quality according to the demand of clients, holding employees accountable and making the service mechanism transparent still remain largely unaddressed in DIP due to ineffective redressal mechanism of Citizen's Charter. Thus it may be contended that although the initiative of Citizen's Charter in government offices was a great step forward for GoB in achieving quality delivery of public services, the incomplete and inactive complaint mechanism adversely affects the effort.

It is argued that successful introduction of any policy is the key to realization of the concerned policy goals. One major goal of GoB behind the introduction of Citizen's Charter was to ensure the quality of public service delivery. Though Citizen's Charter is undoubtedly the essential first step towards guaranteeing quality public service, findings of this research goes to indicate that the quality of service delivery at DIP is not yet close to the desired level. It has been however noticed that in the presence of Citizen's Charter, quality of DIP services regarding dissemination of information is now more or less assured in DIP. In fact, customers of DIP are now more aware of their rights and in most cases, know how to protect themselves from being deceived. From this perspective, it can be said that the introduction of Citizen's Charter relieved DIP from traditional mode of functioning where clients were hardly able to get information in advance about formalities and other requirements in connection with receiving governmental services.

On the other hand, the study also found that, in most of the cases clients have to apply some kind of persuasion in order to get access to the concerned DIP officials. Moreover, public relation officers of DIP are still not that much empathetic towards clients' needs and demands. Thus the findings of the present study indicate that though the information regarding services of DIP is well published, due to lack of active grievance redressal mechanisms within the organization irregularities, bribery and corruption have not completely disappeared in DIP even

after four years of introduction of Citizen's Charter. Although it was assumed that the introduction of Citizen's Charter in public organizations of Bangladesh would inspire public officials to deliver better services according to preset standards, make them courteous and helpful in delivering services and foster openness, offer choice and consultations to ensure accountability to the clients, as this study in DIP indicates, DIP is still struggling to come close to the best practices in government service delivery. So it seems that reaching the height of better service standards envisaged by the introducers of Citizen's Charter at DIP is still a far cry.

The following table summarizes the major findings of the study on service quality at DIP.

Table 1: Current Service Quality at DIP

Quality	Desired Situation	Current Situation
Timeliness	Passports are delivered within stipulated time	Majority of clients still do not get passports in stipulated time.
Accessibility	Information on all services are provided in clear, concise, and jargon-free language; employees' names and designations along with floor location within the office premises are prominently displayed; offices of key employees are conveniently located within the reach of the service seekers together with easy accessibility at time of special needs; and more importantly, continuous availability of key employees at all desks throughout the working hours.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Majority of clients find required information on application for new passports; ii) Some important information—especially on lost and damaged passport—and information on making official passport applications are not provided; iii) Names, floor locations, and telephone number of key officials are not provided; iv) It is still difficult for socially disadvantaged groups to get access to services; v) Majority of clients resort to some kind of persuasion tactics to get access to key officials; vi) Security guards still harass and intimidate visitors to some extent.
Responsiveness and Friendliness	Visiting clients are received with respect, care and empathy during submission of application form and collection of passport; client telephone calls are attended with readiness, promptness, and courteousness; and client problems are listened to with a willing mind to help.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Many DIP officials still display some kind of unwelcome attitude towards customers; ii) Officials are still reluctant to extend help and care for clients; iii) Many DIP employees are still below the expected level of courteousness, promptness, and responsiveness.
Cost Effective Service	Service requests are received and services are delivered ensuring least possible spend of clients' money, energy and time.	To majority of clients, having a passport is still tantamount to wastage of time, full of hassles, harassment, annoyance, and irritation.
Grievance Redressal Mechanism	Customers are able to file complaints, acknowledgement of customers' complaint within specific timeframe.	Still non-functional

Source: Field Study

2. Problems behind Effectiveness of Citizen's Charter Program

In academic arena it is now widely argued that the successful implementation of any reform initiative eventually depends upon the degree of power exercised by the concerned employees. Moreover, it is also acknowledged that high degree of discretionary power exercised by employees ensures the fulfilment of customer requirements instantly. At DIP, the success of Citizen's Charter depends upon the exercise of power by frontline staff as they directly interact with the customers and know clients' needs more intimately and can provide solutions in the first instance. Such practice may also help Citizen's Charter to have an impact on the service delivery quality of DIP. On the other hand, the lower the degree of power exercised by concerned employees, the lesser the chances for Citizen's Charter to become effective. To test the status of the officials' usage of discretionary power at DIP, this study examined the power distance culture²³ of DIP. In order to collect data on related issues the researcher asked the employees how frequently they took decision on the spot and how frequently they took initiative to instantly solve client problems. The survey results show that among nine employees, the top level employees (Deputy Director and Assistant Director of Regional Passport Office in the capital city Dhaka²⁴ (RPOD) and Regional Passport Office in the district of Jessore²⁵ (RPOJ) respectively) reported always, mid-level employees (Assistant Director of RPOD) reported sometimes, and lower mid-level employees (Deputy Assistant Director of RPOD) rarely solved their client problems without prior consultations with their respective higher controlling officials. It also confirmed that front line or lower graded employees (Upper Division Clerks) never solved client problems without consulting their seniors or higher officials. The front-line employees needed to go through more layers than the mid-level employees of DIP. It also shows that the top level officials at both Dhaka and Jessore Offices do not need to go through any hierarchical level for taking any initiative. These findings clearly reveal that there exists a pyramid style hierarchical structure at DIP and also, a power-gap exists between lower and higher echelons of DIP hierarchy. These may also lead to the conclusion that power is not delegated to the very important (for Citizen's Charter) lower level or front line employees at DIP.

²³ Power distance means 'the extent to which the less powerful member(s) of institutions and organizations within a country expect and accept that power is distributed unequally' (Hofstede and Hofstede 2005, p.46). In such situation, power is ultimately vested in the hand of the superior authority of the organization and subordinates are expected to obey the orders of the superiors.

²⁴ Dhaka is the capital of Bangladesh and the principal city of Dhaka division and the largest city of Bangladesh.

²⁵ Jessore is one of the 64 districts located in the Khulna division of southwestern Bangladesh.

It is generally argued that the larger the number of employees practically involved in the decision making process, the higher the possibility of existence of a participatory decision-making culture. A participatory decision-making culture provides discretionary power to frontline employees to work with taking the full enthusiasm and ownership of the core values of Citizen's Charter. On the contrary, low-level participation of frontline employees in decision-making process indicates high power distance culture. In such type of cultures, decision is made in top-down fashion. The majority of decision making theorists assert that when the decision-making power is vested at the top echelons of administration and the implementers *i.e.*, frontline employees, cannot participate in the decision making process, and do not own the organizational decision, ultimately, it becomes extraordinarily challenging for them to implement those decisions. Thus in theory, participation of the frontline staff in decision-making regarding Citizen's Charter should have been facilitated to ensure effectiveness of Citizen's Charter program in DIP. In this regard, employees of DIP were interviewed to reveal the decision-making culture of DIP. The findings of the study show that decision-making culture of DIP is authoritarian rather than participatory. A report published by Civil Service Change Management Program²⁶ (CSCMP 2009) identifies 'highly centralized administration and management practices of Bangladesh Civil Service as the core problem of detriment performance of field level personnel'. It also asserts that this also causes delay in decision-making process which hampers effective and efficient service delivery.

Further it is generally argued that in a high power distance culture, information flows downwards in an organization's hierarchy. On the contrary, in a low power distance culture, information flows to and from both directions—bottom and up.

It can be deduced that at DIP, top management gives instructions or orders and subordinates are responsible to carry out these instructions or orders. This further confirms the existence of an undesired environment at DIP where high power-gap exists amongst superiors and their subordinates. So it may be argued that the power of making major decisions in the organization

²⁶ Civil Service Change Management Program is a civil service reform programme, run by the Ministry of Establishment (MoE), Bangladesh with the technical assistance of United Nations Development Programme.

resides invariably at the top echelon leaving out little to the lower ranks. In summary, employees at DIP perform within a ‘top-down’ or authoritarian decision making culture.

An organization with high power distance rarely interacts with its environment and does not wish to know the current service quality status of it from customers’ views. Thus degree of communication level with stakeholders has been taken here as indicator of high or low power distance. To understand the degree of communication level of the organization *i.e.*, the DIP, with its customers, investigations were conducted into some crucial issues of the organization such as, how frequently customers are consulted to know their opinion regarding service quality, the provision of taking feedback from clients, and provision of taking their ideas before launching any new policy regarding passport services. The responses received indicate that there is hardly any communication between DIP and its clients in terms of soliciting information. A study carried out by CSCMP (2010) also found the lack of participation of citizens in defining the services. The above findings indicate that as a government organization, DIP serves its customers according to its own culture without adequate knowledge of demands of its clients which resembles a closed system detached from or having no interaction with the environment.

From the above scenario, it can be inferred that the degree of communication between service providers and service seekers is less or absent at DIP where the latter group are considered outsiders by the former group. It also implies that DIP officials still maintain some distance with their clients. According to Jamil (2002), ‘a classical bureaucrat of Bangladesh exhibits a high degree of power distance between authority and common citizens’. He further contends that in their interaction with citizens, the overall attitude of majority of the bureaucrats is elitist rather than egalitarian.

It may further be claimed that, contrary to the spirit of Citizen’s Charter, by tradition bureaucrats in Bangladesh are habituated to consider themselves as masters and not servants of citizens which makes the service providers more powerful than customers they are supposed to serve. Coupled with the top-down mentality of the employees of DIP, client empowerment in post Citizen’s Charter period at DIP remains quite elusive.

The study has showed that top echelons of DIP employees enjoy all power to resolve any kind of problems faced by the clients and leave very little power in the hands of lower tier employees. It has also been indicated that only higher-level employees of DIP can actually participate in decision making process, whereas lower-level employees occasionally can share their ideas with their bosses which do not ensure their participation. The study has revealed that citizens are rarely consulted by the officials to take into cognizance their opinions regarding the service provision of DIP. The differences between higher and lower-level employees regarding delegation of authority and low-level of clients' involvement in the decision making activities of DIP indicate that the administrative culture of DIP is more likely to be of high power distance rather than a low power one.

For this study the assumption was that the process-oriented employees concentrate more on maintaining the organizational procedures and end-up undermining the customers' needs. Such kind of practices hardly encourages public employees to be flexible, bypass or break rules to meet customers' needs even in cases of urgency. According to World Bank (1996), government officials of Bangladesh are guided by various rules, which allocate powers, delineate responsibilities, set out the structures of authority within the bureaucracy, and provide procedural guidelines. 'The Bangladesh Civil Service is not strongly oriented towards serving its citizens. Instead it is predominantly focused on administrative procedures' (Jacobs 2009). In this respect, Jamil (2002) opines that the bureaucrats of Bangladesh are more concerned with rules rather than results. On the same issue, Nayem (2010) found that employees of Upazila Land Offices in Bangladesh have a strong tilting towards process orientation.

The aforementioned scenario and statements portray that lower-level employees at DIP do not cross lines irrespective of the urgency of the matter while high ranking officials may, at times, use their authority to make exceptions to established processes. In this respect, Zafarullah (1998) argues that in spite of having scope for delegated decision making, the middle and junior-level officers exhibit a propensity to shrug off responsibility for fear of contravening the decisions of their superiors. Of the rules and regulations of BCS, Zafarullah (1998) mentions that, 'virtually every decision in the Secretariat is governed by disparate sets of rules and regulations which tend to create procedural bottlenecks'. A World Bank report (1996) reveals that in the case of Bangladesh, staffs at the lower-levels in particular lack sufficient confidence—the result of a

lack of knowledge and understanding of rules and policies, as well as deficiencies in training. Employees in general have learnt that their goal is not to produce results, please customers or save taxpayers' money, but to avoid mistakes. So a culture of fear grows among bureaucrats that make them apprehend that common sense is risky and creativity is dangerous.

During the observation, it was noted that when a lower-level employee is not in his seat, none of his/her colleagues would bother to attend a client even if the client was waiting for a long time for that particular assigned person to return to his/her seat. The concept of 'one point service' does not exist at DIP and according to the officials of DIP, the process and regulations of a GoB office do not permit anyone to stand in for another employee even in his/her absence. With regard to actual implementation of Citizen's Charter by civil servants of Bangladesh, a study of CSCMP (2009) found that Citizen's Charter is not used by government officials to benchmark the quality of service delivery, rather it is considered as just another document which they have to comply with in response to directives of the government.

In order to find out the type of citizen centric orientation among DIP employees, the researcher asked employees whether or not they maintain predetermined procedures of service delivery even in the case of emergency. Out of the nine employees, six replied that they strictly maintain predetermined standards of accomplishing a task in all situations including emergencies.

Although some officials consider the introduction of Citizen's Charter as a good initiative, they are reluctant to apply many of its principles. Accordingly, while some changes have taken place (albeit on a small scale), this study found that these changes have remained confined at the top of the organization. Whereas the lower-level officials *i.e.*, those responsible to deal with the clients still emphasize on rules and regulations rather than being clientele centric. It proves that changes have not taken place at lower echelons or among frontline employees. From the findings of this research on two sub-factors of organizational culture (rules-regulations orientation versus customer orientation, and stability versus changing the mentality of officials), it appears that majority of DIP employees are tilted more towards strong 'uncertainty avoidance' than weak 'uncertainty avoidance' culture.

Different studies (TIB report 2007; IGS report 2007; Alam and Rahman 2006; Rahman and Alam 2007) have revealed the fact that Bangladesh passport department is suffering from scarcity of human resources. Contrary to the popular belief that the civil service of Bangladesh is over staffed, many government offices of Bangladesh lack adequate staff and DIP is a vivid example of such inadequacies. In 2007, Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) disclosed that DIP has less manpower than the approved positions as almost 100 positions in DIP are lying vacant. Ironically the staff for which the department has approval is not sufficient compared to huge increase of workloads in recent years. The TIB report also claimed that though the staffs of DIP work for extended hours, even up to late evening they cannot meet the demands of applicants for issuance/renewal of passports. The table below depicts the real picture of staff strength in DIP.

Table 2: Allocation vs. Availability of Manpower at DIP

DIP Offices	Allocated Posts	Available Staff	Shortages
Regional Passport Office, Dhaka	87	73	14
Regional Passport Office, Jessore	14	9	5
Total	101	82	19

Sources: Field Visit, June-August, 2010

Therefore, it is understood that insufficiency of human resources is a big barrier for DIP to deliver quality services to the citizens. More than bureaucratic attitude or close organizational culture, it is due to shortage of manpower and infrastructure facility that DIP officials are unable to maintain the quality promised by Citizen's Charter. In this regard, a study carried out by CSCMP (2009) ascertained that, in Bangladesh, the existing Citizen's Charter were formulated and implemented without taking into consideration the capacity of the local field administration to actually deliver the services. The reality is that each of the regional passport offices provides services to millions of people with inadequate manpower. Extreme work pressure from this huge number of applicants is visible to any visitor to the regional passport offices on any working day. Insisting that more than 100 employees are needed to tackle the massive demand of passports at his office, the Deputy Director of DIP, noted that "I have to manage my daily work with the help of 73 employees. The number of employees is not enough to deliver almost 300 passports on

daily basis.” Additional Director of Jessore Regional Office had pointed out that, “It is possible to deliver quality services if the office gets sufficient human resources from the government”.

Lately the DIP offices are heavily loaded with work related to issuance of both Machine Readable Passports (MRPs) as well as old styled Manual passports. In addition, they also renew a good number of expired passports. The shortage of manpower is strongly felt when it comes to service deliveries especially in line with the Citizen’s Charter. Moreover, with the introduction of MRP, more computer literate officials are required to provide quality services. The shortage of computer literate staff has come out from similar statements of Deputy Director of Regional Passport Office, Dhaka and Assistant Director of Regional Passport Office, Jessore: “I have to carry out all computer related jobs in the office (e.g., data maintenance, email correspondence, letter issue etc.) by just one computer operator.” It indicates that DIP offices do not have sufficient computer literate staffs to support its needs.

The Deputy Director of Passport department further pointed out that, “we rarely get the budget (for human resources) for our department that we proposed”. According to him, sometimes they get half of their required manpower for the organization. Moreover, the researcher found that because of the shortage of the required manpower, the concerned Public Relations Officers (PRO) could not take special care of the clients even if they wished so. This has also been illustrated by the statement of one PRO who said: “As we do not have enough staff to provide even minimum services, we could not give special attention to the clients even if we wish.”

A report of CSMP (2009) also specified the lack of capacity of service providers in terms of unskilled and less knowledgeable personnel, absence and unfilled vacant posts as the biggest hindrance in the implementation of Citizen’s Charter. From the available primary and secondary information, it may be claimed that inadequate human resource is creating a barrier in delivering better services at DIP.

No organization’s goal can be achieved without the necessary number of skilled and motivated manpower. Proper organizational training makes the personnel skilled which, in turn may lead to capacity building of the respective organization. The more an organization possesses skilled

employees, the higher are opportunities for effectiveness of its policies and programs. Ingraham (1997) observes that capacity building through training and the provision of information/knowledge can shape policy outcomes (cited in Beniwal 2005). Therefore, the officials of DIP need relevant training to learn new values and culture of Citizen's Charter *i.e.*, accountability, responsiveness, transparency and participation, and subsequently practice these principles.

In order to find out the efficiency of DIP employees in implementing Citizen's Charter, the researcher asked the employees whether they have received any training program for implementing Citizen's Charter. All respondents (N=9) replied in the negative; that no special training was offered to them for introducing and exercising Citizen's Charter in their office. However, three of them mentioned that they attended an introductory lecture on Citizen's Charter concept and its usefulness in service delivery system. Since the employees of DIP did not receive any formal training on Citizen's Charter program, it can be assumed that there is certainly a lack of understanding among them about principles and usefulness of Citizen's Charter. The study findings indicate that all employees of DIP are not yet aware of the importance of grievance redressal mechanism. A report of CSCMP (2009) also reported that the employees are not well-oriented on the citizen's charter initiative. Moreover, it found that training is insufficient to strengthen capacity of an organization to deal with its changing environment. Thus it is likely to be certain that absence of enthusiasm to uphold and practice the values and ethos of Citizen's Charter among employees of DIP can be attributed to lack of proper training and knowledge.

Thus, it is clear that DIP lacks adequate human capital even to deliver pre-Citizen's Charter standard of services. On top of such inadequacy, additional workload imposed by the introduction of Citizen's Charter for example- shorter delivery turn-around-time and higher standards of service deliveries, the workforce of DIP has been over loaded which ultimately impede the effectiveness of Citizen's Charter at DIP.

The following table presents the major findings of organizational cultural factor and Human resources variables within DIP.

Table 3: Major findings on organizational culture and human resource variables

Variables		Present situation
Organizational Culture	Power Distance	i) Superiors are more powerful than subordinates regarding exercising discretionary power, giving solutions to clients' problem and participating in decision-making process. ii) There is long distance between service seekers and service providers
	Uncertainty Avoidance	i) Unwillingness to accept some techniques (grievance redressal, publishing standard behaviour patterns of employees) of Citizen's Charter ii) Lower-level employees try to follow the rules and regulations more strictly while dealing with clients than the top-level employees iii) Service providers of DIP, especially the frontline employees, fear to break or bypass any official rules.
Human resource		i) Human resource is inadequate compare to actual requirement ii) Lack of training among employees regarding understanding of Citizen's Charter

Source: Field Study

The above scenario of Citizen's Charter program is not exclusive in DIP only. A recent media report²⁷ suggests that after its commencement, the CC program has failed to meet the expectations of the service seekers in general. The report revealed that many public organizations (hospitals, law enforcing agencies, local government bodies and railway terminals) are yet to display Citizen's Charters in their office premises in line with the government order and in many cases the people do not receive services as promised. Most of the people in rural areas, even in district level, also barely have any idea about the Charter.

In general, the officials of the public organizations of Bangladesh still adhere to the old bureaucratic system and barely live up to the promises, enshrined in the charters, when it comes to delivering their stipulated services. The absence of the provisions for ensuring accountability, transparency and legal redressal for failure in complying with the Citizen's Charter creates the loopholes and options of taking bribe as a precondition of delivering services in many public offices. From the foregoing discussions it may be argued that neither service recipients nor service providers are still fully aware that the Citizen's Charter is a strong tool for the improvement of basic service delivery. Hence it has failed to produce any effective result since its introduction in 2007.

²⁷ New Age, 20 January 2012

However, it seems that further improvements are possible, albeit rather slowly. In 2009 the incumbent government took initiatives to introduce second-generation Citizen's Charters, prepared in a bottom-up approach in consultations with all stakeholders, including service recipients. This initiative wanted to keep pace with all the changes in Bangladeshi society. So, the second-generation Citizen's Charter takes into account the current capacity of field administrators and officers and the active involvement of the field officers, citizens, civil society organizations and non-governmental organization in the formulation of local Citizen's Charters. At the same time, the field administration took the opportunity to assess, benchmark and monitor their own performance, identify capacity gaps and start up a dialogue with the central administration about the kind of support they need. The second -generation Citizen's Charters making program paid more attention to the process side of the Charter.

3. Key Principles of the Second Generation Citizen's Charter

The key principles and components of the Second Generation Citizen's Charter published by Ministry of Establishment, GoB (2010) are as follows:

1. Set standards of services to meet the needs/expectations of the citizens;
2. Focus on the needs of the citizens and the capacity of the provider;
3. Engage local citizen's and service providers in the formulation process;
4. Encourage citizen-civil servant collaboration;
5. Promote transparency through information and monitoring;
6. Establish 'open' mechanisms for citizen's complaints and redress;
7. Reflect value of money through efficiency and cost effectiveness; and
8. Require patience, dedication and commitment.

Lately, the Ministry of Public Administration has taken the initiative to launch this next phase of the Citizen's Charter initiative with a practical manual that provides a clear explanation on how Citizen's Charters might contribute to improved service standards, quality and delivery, a standard format for a Charter and how best to engage the people in the formulation and implementation of services that impact their daily life. Thus, it is hoped that this Citizen's

Charter will result in better services that have a real impact upon citizen's lives and therefore contribute to further improvement of pro-people service delivery in Bangladesh.

VII. Conclusion

In order to examine the effectiveness of Citizen's Charter program in the public organizations of Bangladesh, cultural compatibility of Bangladesh Civil Service has been studied reviewing the literature. In order to identify the crucial factors and actors of making the Citizen's Charter initiative effective in Bangladesh, various variables were analyzed. The study broadly reveals that the introduction of Citizen's Charter initiative is a positive step. However, it is a gradual process to change a culture that has been entrenched for hundreds of years. There are a few things should be addressed at DIP. The coexistence of dual authority—SB of Police and DIP—affects the performance of DIP and reduces the timely delivery of services. The authority has to find a more coherent solution to address this as one of the core issues. For the time being, a better coordination between the DIP officials and the SB Police can pave the way for a *de facto* solution. The issue of inadequate manpower including technical expertise also has to be addressed to reduce the performance gap. Besides, as the study suggests, the fees charged for the passport have to be made more cost-effective. There is also a need for grievance redressal mechanism. The authority has to provide the clients of DIP with an opportunity to lodge complaints if they have found the service quality poor and unacceptable.

Another point to consider is the decision making process at DIP and the ownership of those decisions. To ensure the ownership of the decisions that the front-line employees carry out while discharging their duties, it would be more beneficial if there is a mechanism to involve and sometimes encourage them to be involved in the decision making process. It is also critical to vest some decision making powers on the mid- and lower-level service providers so that they can solve minor issues at own discretion at their meeting point with the users. Furthermore, changing the mind-set of the bureaucrats is also very important.

On a few positive sides, it has been found that the introduction of Citizen's Charter has made the process a little easier for the clients many of whom now know how to process their own applications. The free flow of information has also increased the awareness level of the service

recipients and it is evident that the information provided in Citizen's Charter—on cost of service, delivery time of service, and necessary information on how to apply for a specific service—makes the public administrative system more transparent to the citizens.

However, recent media reports indicate Citizen's Charters in most of the public sector organizations are still ineffective in many of the public offices. It is hoped that the introduction and proper implementation and monitoring of second generation Charters will contribute towards more effective service delivery in public offices. Otherwise such tools for better governance will remain more rhetoric than reality.

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