# Ethics & Morality · GS - IV

**Explain the basic principles of citizens charter movement and bring out its importance.**

| EXAM YEAR | PAPER | SUBJECT |
|---|---|---|
| 2019 | GS - IV | Ethics & Morality |

| MARKS | WORD LIMIT |
|---|---|
| 10 | ~150 words |

## Answer Hint

**Service standards; transparency; accountability; time-bound delivery; grievance redressal; citizen participation; service quality; responsive administration**

## Model Answer

### Introduction

A Citizens' Charter is a public declaration by an organisation specifying the services it provides, the standards citizens can expect and the mechanisms available for addressing grievances.

### Basic Principles

**1. Quality:** Public services should meet clearly defined standards.

**2. Timeliness:** Services should be delivered within specified time limits.

**3. Transparency:** Eligibility criteria, procedures, fees and required documents should be publicly available.

**4. Accountability:** Officials and institutions should be answerable for service failures.

**5. Grievance Redressal:** Citizens should have accessible mechanisms to register complaints and seek remedies.

**6. Consultation and Participation:** Service users should contribute feedback to improve delivery.

**7. Non-discrimination:** Services should be accessible fairly to all eligible citizens.

### Importance

Citizens’ Charters clarify public-service obligations, reduce uncertainty and opportunities for corruption, improve administrative responsiveness and empower citizens to question delays. They also encourage performance monitoring and a shift from a department-centred to a citizen-centred approach.

**Limitations and Improvements**

Many charters remain vague, lack enforceable service standards or are poorly publicised. They should specify measurable timelines, responsible officials, compensation or remedies where applicable, and periodic performance reviews.

**Conclusion**

A Citizens’ Charter is an instrument of participatory and accountable governance. Its effectiveness depends on public awareness, measurable commitments and credible grievance-redressal mechanisms.

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