



# Capacity Building Commission: Note on Citizen Centricity

## Table of Content

Background	2
Rationale	2
Measuring Citizen Centricity	4
Way Forward	4



## Background

### “Jan Bhagidari is the biggest asset of democracy”

- Hon'ble Prime Minister. Shri. Narendra Modi<sup>1</sup>

There exists a need for ensuring the initiatives taken by the state are citizen centric to propel the spirit of Jan Bhagidari which has been quoted as the biggest asset of democracy by the Hon'ble prime minister of the country. The concept of *Jan Bhagidari* (people's participation) implies the role of the collective in implementing policies and programmes. The **objective** of this note is to establish the need for measuring citizen-centricity in the policies/programmes of the government.

Citizen-centric approach refers to the efforts of development focussing on the actual needs of the citizens. This involves designing policies and interventions that can contribute towards empowering the citizens and enhancing their social and economic capabilities.

Keeping citizen partnership at the heart of governance is a unique attempt of India to transcend the citizens to the state of enlightenment by encouraging them to participate and become equal partners in governance.

## Rationale

All policies and programmes affect and contribute to the life of a citizen directly. Whether it is a scheme related to Anganwadi and Poshan, or rural employment guarantee (MGNREGS), energy conservation or expansion of railway gauge, interlinking of rivers or supporting space research, all relate to the citizens and build a collective pride and belonging to the nation. The Indian state has built itself tremendously over the past 77 years, which can be portrayed through the evolution of the state and its citizens. Since

---

<sup>1</sup> Retrieved on September 5, 2023 from PMO's Twitter handle - <https://twitter.com/PMOIndia/status/632374078414827521>



1947, the state has evolved from a provider to a provisioner state in the 90s, to a partner state in its Amrit Kaal<sup>2</sup>

The Indian citizen is an empowered entity. The relationship between the state and the citizen is also evolving, and so is the state's attempt to engage citizens in its way of functioning. The state needs to continuously adapt to the attitude of treating citizens to be equal partners. Any intervention of the government cannot be successful when executed or designed with a paternalistic attitude. The government's efforts through its various programmes will have meaningful significance when they empower communities or its citizens<sup>3</sup>

The pursuit to measure citizen centricity is a pursuit to amplify the voices of the citizens. India has seen the rise of numerous civil society organisations, and activists bringing up the voice of different communities to the mainstream.<sup>4</sup> At present, with the state willing to be a *jan-bhagidaar* in the journey of India's development, it needs to be strengthened with a measurement toolkit that will help understand the level of citizen participation.

Citizen- enlightenment implies demystifying the what and why of policy making cycle and making it understandable to each of the citizens and how it impacts their lives; Citizen-engagement requires citizens to be updated with the important information that is freely available in the public domain; use their generic sense to make meaning out of it and, form reasonable interpretations; Citizen-empowerment involves advocating our understanding in a non-partisan and objective manner to have the voices and needs of a common man acknowledged.

---

<sup>2</sup> Retrieved on September 5, 2023 from <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetailm.aspx?PRID=1894876>,  
<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaselframePage.aspx?PRID=1895313>

<sup>3</sup> Balasubramaniam, Ramaswami. i the citizen, Mysuru, Karnataka, India: Grassroots Research and Advocacy Movement

<sup>4</sup> Retrieved on September 5, 2023 from Asian Development Bank -  
<https://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/publication/879896/civil-society-brief-india.pdf>



## Measuring Citizen Centricity

*Can citizen participation be actually measured in its real sense?*

The measure of citizen centricity should be able to measure the actual involvement of the citizens. It should be able to assess whether the participation of citizens is an enforced or cosmetic process by its design, or if it actually empowers the community to evolve themselves while contributing with their participation. A step further will be to assess the existing structures and efforts in the design and implementation of these programmes.

A key factor in measuring the citizen centricity of an initiative can be achieved through understanding and analysing the accessibility; transparency, responsiveness and efficiency of the programme for its citizens.

Many programs in India allow for community involvement by design. A fitting example of this is the PM Fasal Bima Yojana. Launched by PM Modi in 2016 after combining two major policies for crop insurance and ensuring sustainable agriculture, it was relaunched in 2019-2020. The revised scheme is a unique culmination of farmers' feedback, thus covering a variety of concerns – an illustration of the power of dialogue used for transformative change.

## Way Forward

The government is committed to the ideals of “**Sabka Sath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Viswas aur Sabka Prayas.**” With an aim to propel the same for the nation, the Capacity Building Commission invites a roundtable to brainstorm and build a toolkit to answer one direct question: **Is the state's initiative citizen-centric, and how to measure it?**