

# Evaluation of the Performance on rendering Public Service in Compliance with the Citizen Charter by Divisional Secretariats under the Colombo District Secretariat



**National Audit Office**

**Audit Branch : WNP/CB**



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## 1. **Executive Summary**

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District of Colombo, the commercial capital of Sri Lanka, has a population of 2,577,350 while comprising of 13 Divisional Secretariats and 557 Grama Niladhari Divisions. Operation of Government affairs at District level and uplifting the living condition of people and s efficiently providing services to people through implementation of economic development activities, making use of provisions received from District Secretariats, maintaining direct coordination with the Provincial Council is the key objective of all Divisional Secretariats.

All administrative activities at ground level are carried out by Grama Niladharis through Divisional Secretariats while a number of services ranging from issuance of Birth, Marriage and Death certificates, issuance of revenue licences for motor vehicles up to reference of applications of National Identity Cards to the Department for Registration of Persons are carried out directly or indirectly on all affairs of the public by Divisional Secretariats. Accordingly, the objective of the performance audit carried out by us was to examine whether the public, in carrying out those diversified functions by the Divisional Secretariats, was able to obtain the said services efficiently and effectively.

Eight Divisional Secretariats, namely Colombo, Sri Jayawardenepura Kotte, Kaduwela, Thimbirigasyaya, Moratuwa, Homagama, Kolonnawa and Kesbewa of the 13 Divisional Secretariats of the District of Colombo were selected for audit test checks so as to cover 75 per cent of the population thereof and the following matters were observed in Audit.

A record room with adequate facilities is not available in the Registrar's Division for safe keeping of registers maintained for issuance of Birth, Death and Marriage certificates while fire extinguishers and camera systems necessary for security purposes have not been installed and action had not been taken to safeguard public information as well.

Child Rights Promotion Officers in collaboration with officers of the Divisional Secretariats had taken various measures for motivating children who are not

attending school, towards attending school. However, those measures have not proved successful. Parents' negligence and ignorance of education, imprisonment of mother or father, children living with guardians as mothers are abroad, unwillingness of principals in admitting children who have dropped out from school and addiction of children towards various forms of abuse can be indicated as reasons therefor.

Drug menace which is spreading at an alarming rate can be shown as one of the greatest threats evident in the area of authority of the Divisional Secretariat belonging to the Colombo District Secretariat. It has been revealed that the drug menace has spread among almost every Grama Niladhari Division, specifically in the Divisional Secretariat Divisions of Colombo, Kolonnawa, Thimbirigasyaya and Moratuwa. Even though the Divisional Secretariat had intervened in the resolution of social issues arising thereby, they had not proved successful. Thus, the drug menace has become a threat that engulfs the whole society in darkness due to reasons such as lack of motivation for children to engage in good deeds at social level and parental drug addiction despite providing consultation services, directing children to rehabilitation centres, making the parents aware and conducting awareness programmes at school level. Several social issues such as lack of parental protection and love, becoming victims of various forms of abuse due to social insecurity towards children, marrying at a young age, earning money through illegal activities such as drug trafficking and distribution due to financial impoverishment, existing in the family environment.

With the marriage of children who become degenerated through society, before the marriageable age, they too become a link in this vicious circle of society and their children as well become victims of the same vicious circle, giving rise to a number of social issues such as collapse of children's education, financial problems, lost childhood, family disputes, increase in infant deaths, mental stress and unsuccessful married life.

In supplying necessary services to the public, it was evident that the public is inconvenienced due to lack of adequate facilities to Grama Niladharis as well as to the officers serving in Divisional Secretariats.

Out of 557 Grama Niladhari Divisions in the District of Colombo, 248 lack space to maintain offices properly and it was observed that the public who arrive to obtain services therefrom, are inconvenienced. Moreover, the Grama Niladharis lack adequate space to keep their official documents as well as office equipment. The Grama Niladharis have faced a situation where they cannot maintain information systems on retired persons, disabled persons, state lands, lands on long term lease, lands on annual lease, Samurdhi beneficiaries and recipients of assistance for ailment, in an updated manner. As recipients of aid at rural level and persons eligible to receive aid could not be properly identified, a risk of failure in obtaining services relevant to the particular person, exists. As such, these weaknesses as well had affected the inefficiency of public service.

According to the above mentioned observations, attention should be drawn towards taking measures to ensure the accuracy of monies returned without making payments in granting aid provided by the Department of Social Services, eradicating the drug menace from areas where it has been spread, with more active contribution from other Government institutions (Police, schools) than their present contribution, implementing a network of programmes required for making the parents and children aware of preventing underage marriages and as well as preparing a proper methodology for duly providing office facilities to Grama Niladharis.

## **2. Introduction**

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District of Colombo, the commercial capital of Sri Lanka, has a population of about 2,577,350 and it comprises of 13 Divisional Secretariats and 557 Grama Niladhari Divisions. Operation of Government affairs at District level and uplifting the living condition of people and supplying efficient services to people through implementation of economic development activities making use of provisions received from District Secretariats, maintaining direct coordination with the Provincial Council is the key objective of all Divisional Secretariats.

## **2.1 Institutional Background**

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### **2.1.1 Concept of Citizen Charter**

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The Citizen Charter has been introduced by Public Administration Circular No.05/2008 of 06 February 2008. It has been indicated that a Citizen Charter should be established in every Government institution in order to provide services to the public by providing a particular service at maximum level under qualities and standards generally accepted by all as a written bond that the requirements of the public obtaining services from a Government institution would be catered to promptly, efficiently, qualitatively and continuously.

### **2.1.2 Principles to be considered in Institutionalization of the Citizen Charter**

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In terms of paragraph 1.2 of Annexure “A” of the Guidelines for introducing the Citizen Service Charter, 15 significant principles have been introduced in the institutionalization of the Citizen Charter and they are as follows.

- (i) Stipulation of service standards (taking into account the public requirement for services and the capacity of institutions)
- (ii) Assurance of providing accurate matters and information openly, to the public
- (iii) Public participation and consultation
- (iv) Encouraging the public to obtain and make use of services and publicize service supplying media
- (v) Treating all with courtesy, cordiality and fairness
- (vi) Correcting mistakes, if any
- (vii) Effective use of resources
- (viii) Providing opportunity for creativity
- (ix) Being cooperative towards other service supplying institutions involved in the supply of services
- (x) Acceptability (Eg: Effectiveness of performance)
- (xi) Response (Eg: supply of services on time)



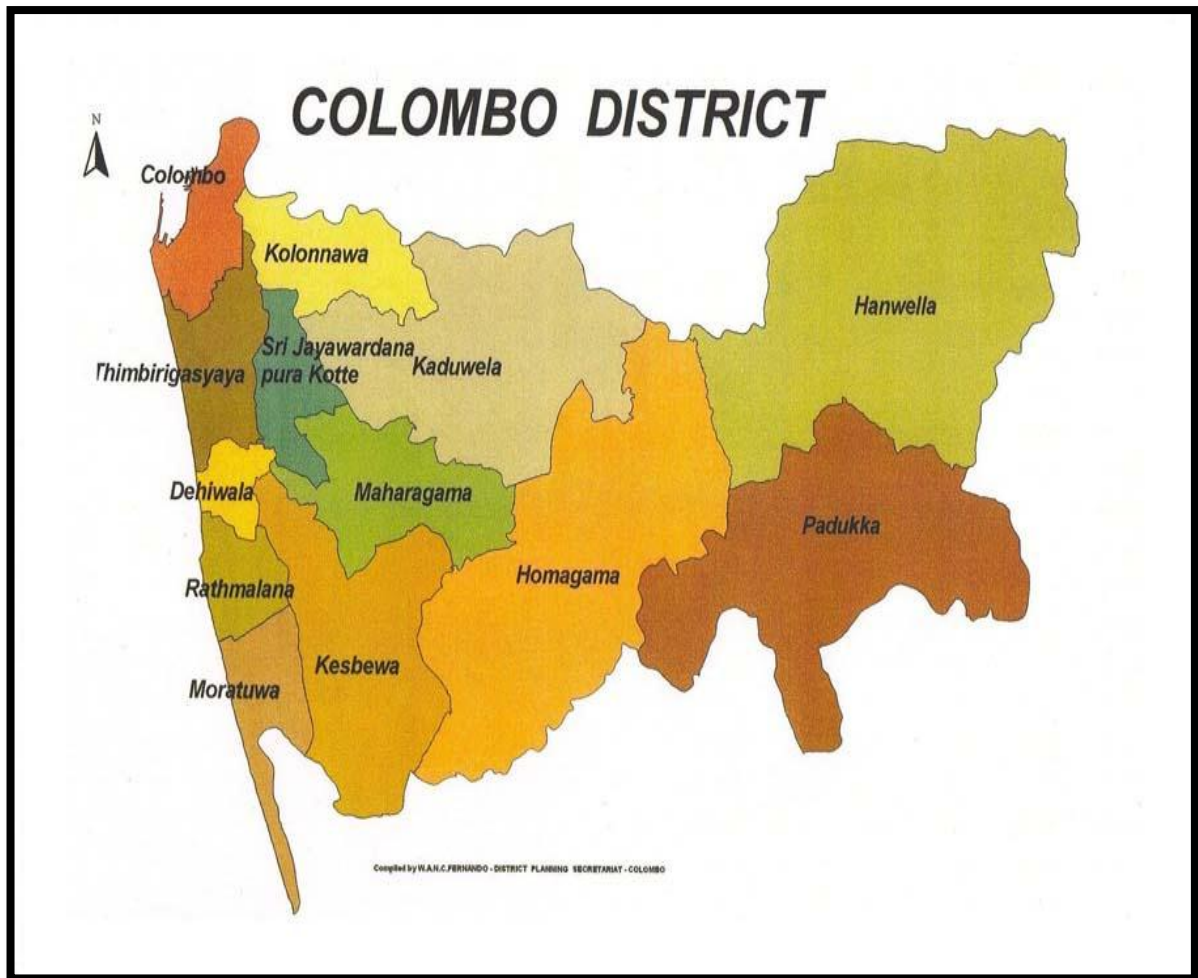
- (xii) Confidence (Eg: Giving priority to requirements of clients)
- (xiii) Affability (Paying due attention towards the requirement)
- (xiv) Courtesy, attentiveness and willingness for supply of services (Eg: Indicating willingness and readiness for supply of services)
- (xv) Use of simple comprehensible language

### **2.1.3 Steps to be followed in implementing the Citizens' Charter**

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Five steps should be followed in implementing the Citizens' Charter in the Divisional Secretariats.

- (i) Properly formulating the Citizens' Charter
- (ii) Promotional Phase
- (iii) Service Recovery Phase
- (iv) Follow- up Action
- (v) Evaluation and Improvement



## 2.2 Vision, Mission and Key Functions of the Divisional Secretariats

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### (a) Vision

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Delivering an optimum service to the public efficiently and effectively by Good Governance and Sustainable Development.

### (b) Mission

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Providing services in accordance with public policies, coordination of resources, enhancing the life of the area through efficient, sustainable and planned process of development with the public participation.

**(c) Key Functions**

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- (i) Executing the office services efficiently and effectively in accordance with the Citizens' Charter.
  - (ii) Formulation and implementation of plans for the infrastructure development of the Division under the decentralized provisions and the provincial council provisions which are allocated annually.
  - (iii) Promotion of ethics, spiritual development and creating a healthy generation, implementation of Disaster Management Programmes.
  - (iv) Archeological conservation, preserving the historical values, implementation of programmes for the promotion of literal and cultural understanding.
  - (v) Empowerment of Samurdhi and Public Aid beneficiaries.
  - (vi) Providing Widows, Orphans and Civil Pensions.

**2.3 Functions executed by the Divisional Secretariats by the Citizens' Charter and Otherwise**

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<b>Services provided</b>	<b>Time taken</b>
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➤ Issuance of Resident Certificates	05 minutes
➤ Issuance of Birth, Marriage, Death Certificates through the computer	05 minutes
➤ Issuance of Motor Traffic Licenses	05 minutes
➤ Issuance of Value Certificates	30 minutes
➤ Issuance of Income Certificates	10 minutes
➤ Issuance of Estimate Certifications	30 minutes
➤ Issuance of Animal Transport Licenses	30 minutes
➤ Issuance of Pawn Licenses	½ day
➤ Issuance of Liquor Licenses	02 days
➤ Issuance of Timber Transport Licenses	15 minutes
➤ Submission of the National Identity Card applications to the Department for Registration of Persons	Once a week

➤ Providing of the National Identity Card for the One- day Service	15 minutes
➤ First Issuance of the Pawn Licenses	02 weeks
➤ Issuance of Tree Felling Permits	15 minutes
➤ Approval of Public Aid	02 weeks
➤ Replying for Electricity objections	02 weeks
➤ Issuance of Conductor Licenses	15 minutes
➤ Furnishing of the recommendations to the President's Fund	10 days

## 2.4 Other Functions

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- (i) Renewal of Liquor License.
- (ii) Registration of Individual and Joint Ventures.
- (iii) Recommendation of Firearm Licenses.
- (iv) Providing recommendation for Sand, Granite and Soil Licenses.
- (v) Providing recommendations for Explosive Licenses.
- (vi) Providing recommendations for Gem Mining Licenses.

## 2.5 Scope of Audit

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The Performance Audit was carried out on the implementation of the Citizens' Charter and on providing services to the public, relating to 8 Divisional Secretariats out of 13 Divisional Secretariats, in a manner that 75 per cent of the total population is covered, based on the time and human resources that could be deployed for the audit.

## 2.6 Authority for Audit

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The audit was carried out under my direction in pursuance of provisions in Article 154(1) of the Constitution of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka and in terms of Section 3(1)(d), 5(2) and Section 12(h) of the National Audit Act No.19 of 2018.

## 2.7 Reasons for Selection of Topic

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Indicating a tendency of centralizing the public to the Colombo District as the commercial Capital City of Sri Lanka and, as necessitated by a relatively growing population, it is observed that the public face inconvenience and difficulties in the supply of all public services from the ground level administrative activities carried out by Grama Niladhari Officers, by the Divisional Secretariats.

The basis for selecting this topic is to analytically discuss the reasons that had been affected relating to not being able to execute the public service efficiently and effectively on not having sufficient facilities for the public officers who serve in the Divisional Secretariats and in Grama Niladhari Divisions and on not having facilities necessary for the performance of the public service.

## 2.8 Audit Objectives

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The main objective of this Performance Audit is evaluating whether an efficient and an effective services are generated to the public who obtain services from the Divisional Secretariats. This audit was carried out through the following fields, relating thereto.

- (a) The implementation of the Citizens' Charter.
- (b) Human resources management in the Divisional Secretariats.
- (c) Physical resources management in the Divisional Secretariats.
- (d) The execution of public services

## 2.9 Audit Criteria

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The provisions made available by the following Acts and Ordinances, Gazette Notifications and Circulars were considered for the Audit Approach.

- (a) Transfer of Powers (Divisional Secretaries) Act (No.58 of 1992)
- (b) The following Circulars issued by the Local Government Division of the Ministry of Home Affairs.

- (i) Annual Administrative Reports prepared in the Divisional Secretariats, under the Instruction No.35, No.HA/DA/8 dated 08 June 1994.
- (ii) Circular on the Public Day in the Divisional Secretariats, Instruction No.34, No.HA/DA/2/4/93/94 dated 04 May 1994.
- (iii) Circular Orders on Replying to the Letters submitted by the public, as per the Instruction No.37, No.HA/DA/4/7 dated 15 December 1994.
- (iv) Circular on the Necessity of Formats in the Divisional Secretariats under the Instruction No.35, No.HA/DA/4/10 dated 02 July 1995.
- (v) Circular on the Coordination of the Processes for the Introduction of the Citizens' Charter/ Clients' Charter, providing Guidelines, Supervision and Evaluation, in terms of the Public Administrative Circular No.05/2008 of 06 February 2008.
- (vi) Circular on Focusing for efficient Public Servants in terms of the Home Affairs Circular No.01/2012 of 11 September 2012.
- (vii) Circular on the Income Certificates and on the Value Certificates in terms of the Local Government Circulars/ Instructions- 2013/04 of 05 November 2013.
- (viii) Circular on providing a more efficient, friendly service to the public who arrive the District Secretariat/ Divisional Secretariats for obtaining services, as per the Home Affairs Circular No.04/2015 of 08 June 2015.
- (ix) Circular on the Divisional Secretariat Office Guidelines.
- (x) Guidelines for the Divisional Secretariats for Grama Niladhari Public Services.

## **2.10 Audit Approach**

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- (a) Studying the Files and Reports.
- (b) Studying of the operative Laws, Rules and Regulations
- (c) Interviews
- (d) Studying of the Guidelines
- (e) Field Inspections
- (f) Obtaining answers by issuing Questionnaires

## **2.11 Other Institutions that connect in executing Functions in the Divisional Secretariats**

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About 40 other Public Institutions connect in executing the functions in the Divisional Secretariat and the Institutions that directly connect for the daily functions, out of them, are as follows.

(a) Registrar General's Department

Issuance of legally certified copies of marriage, birth, death, divorce of Kandyan marriages and divorce of Muslim marriages are carried out by the Registrar's Division of the Divisional Secretariat.

(b) Department of Motor Traffic (Provincial Councils)

Issuance of revenue licences is carried out by the Divisional Secretariats for motor vehicles of the relevant Divisional Secretariat with the intention of obtaining Revenue.

(c) Department for Registration of Persons

Sending applications relevant for issuing national identity cards legally for persons above 16 years of age to the Department for Registration of Persons by normal post and issuing applications for one day service in obtaining national identity cards are carried out by Divisional Secretariats.

(d) Department of Social Services

(e) Department of Probation and Childcare Services

(f) Department of Pensions

### **3. Audit Observations**

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#### **3.1 Formulation of the Citizen Charter**

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##### **3.1.1 Awareness of the Citizen Charter**

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(a) In the step relating to formulation of the said Citizen Charter, a procedural code has been prepared. However, it was observed that even the service supplying officers in the Divisional Secretariats were not much aware in this regard.

##### **(b) Display of the Citizen Charter in the Office Premises**

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The Citizen Charter should be displayed in a public place of the office premises. However, the Citizen Charter had been displayed in the premises of 04 Divisional Secretariats such as Kaduwela, Moratuwa, Kesbewa and Sri Jayawardenepura Kotte out of 08 Divisional Secretariats included in the sample selected for the performance audit while the Citizen Charter of 04 Divisional Secretariats such as Colombo, Kolonnawa, Homagama and Thimbirigasyaya, had not been displayed in a manner of exhibiting to the public.



**මහලු සේවාවන් සැපයීමට අපහේ හැකියාවන් - කොළඹ දිස්ත්‍රික්කය**  
**ස.කොළඹ.දි.ප.ව. සේවාවන් සැපයීමේ ක්‍රියාමාර්ග - කොළඹ.දි.ප.ව. කොට්ඨාසය**  
**Our Ability to Serve you - Colombo District**

සේවාවන් / Services / සේවාවන්	සමය / Time taken / මසය / Hour
01 වැසි ස්ථානයේ සිටි බව Issuing a Certificate of Residence	විනාඩි 05 05 minutes
02 උපරිමාව, විවාහය සහ මරණ සහතික සැපයීම Issuing a Computerized Certificate of Birth, Marriage & Death	විනාඩි 05 05 minutes
03 මෝටර් රථ ආදිය සඳහා වැටුප් සැපයීම Issuing a License of Motor Vehicle Revenue	විනාඩි 05 05 minutes
04 අගය සහතික සැපයීම Issuing a Certificate of Value	විනාඩි 30 30 minutes
05 ආදායම් සහතික සැපයීම Issuing a Certificate of Revenue / Income	විනාඩි 10 10 minutes
06 අගය සහතික සැපයීම Issuing a Certificate of Assessment	විනාඩි 30 30 minutes
07 සතු පරිවහන සඳහා බලපත්‍ර සැපයීම Issuing a License of Transporting Animals	විනාඩි 30 30 minutes
08 උපරිමාවේ අවසර සැපයීම Renewal of a License of Mortgage	විනාඩි 15 15 minutes
09 මරණ සහතික සැපයීම Issuing a Certificate of Death	විනාඩි 02 02 minutes
10 සතු පරිවහන සඳහා බලපත්‍ර සැපයීම Issuing a License of Transporting Timber	විනාඩි 15 15 minutes
11 ජාතික හැඳුනුම්පත සැපයීම Issuing a National Identity Card to the Dept. of Registration of Persons by Normal Post	විනාඩි 02 02 minutes
12 ජාතික හැඳුනුම්පත සැපයීම (එක දින සේවාව) Issuing a National Identity Card (One Day Service)	විනාඩි 15 15 minutes
13 උපරිමාවේ අවසර සැපයීම Issuing a License of Mortgage at first	විනාඩි 02 02 weeks
14 වැසි ස්ථානයේ සිටි බව සහතික සැපයීම Issuing a Certificate of Residence	විනාඩි 02 02 weeks
15 වැසි ස්ථානයේ සිටි බව සහතික සැපයීම Issuing a Certificate of Residence	විනාඩි 02 02 weeks
16 වැසි ස්ථානයේ සිටි බව සහතික සැපයීම Issuing a Certificate of Residence	විනාඩි 02 02 weeks
17 වැසි ස්ථානයේ සිටි බව සහතික සැපයීම Issuing a Certificate of Residence	විනාඩි 02 02 weeks
18 වැසි ස්ථානයේ සිටි බව සහතික සැපයීම Issuing a Certificate of Residence	විනාඩි 15 15 minutes
19 වැසි ස්ථානයේ සිටි බව සහතික සැපයීම Issuing a Certificate of Residence	විනාඩි 10 10 days

මෙහි සඳහන් සේවාවන් සැපයීමට අවශ්‍ය වන සියලුම අවශ්‍යතා සපුරා ඇත.  
 (The above mentioned services can be delivered during the specified time frame only upon the fulfillment of associated requirements)

The Citizen Charter – Sri Jayawardenepura Kotte Divisional Secretariat

(c) Public Awareness

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Even though it had been cited in the circular that the public should be made aware of through notice boards, brochures, counters and websites on procedures to be followed, cost, charges etc. in providing a certain service, the clients had not been made aware on the procedure for obtaining the service. As such, it was seen that the public were becoming inconvenienced by moving from place to place. Moreover, a review programme on functions of the Charter formulated, should be prepared at least once in six months. However, it was observed that those activities are not implemented.

### 3.1.2 Stages on the implementation of the citizen charter

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#### (a) Promoting Stage of the Citizen Charter

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According to the circular, the public should be made aware of through leaflets or handbills on services that can be obtained to the public from Divisional Secretariats based on the Citizen Charter. However, it was observed that the public were not made aware of on services provided by Divisional Secretariats.

#### (b) Updating Stage of Services

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Failure in performing services mentioned in the Citizen Charter during the due period would adversely affect the image and credibility of the institution. As such, services should be updated as soon as possible by taking appropriate measures so as to ensure the credibility on matters mentioned in the Charter. Nevertheless, services of Divisional Secretariats had not been updated accordingly. Moreover, it was observed that there was no good impression in the public with regard to the public service based on complaints obtained by submitting a questionnaire to the public.

### 3.1.3 Timeliness of the citizen charter

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#### (a) Follow-up Action on the Implementation of the Citizen Charter

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A follow up is essential to ensure taking action according to the Citizen Charter. A satisfactory service can be provided to the public by establishing counters on behalf of public for lodging their complaints and adopting a methodology for making relevant officers aware on qualitative as well as positive feedback received thereby and the positive feedback is effective in inspiring the staff with their enthusiasm and satisfaction. Even though a follow up is a very important factor, no action had been taken to establish counters by any Divisional Secretariat.

**(b) Evaluation and Improvement of the Citizen Charter**

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Even though it was expected to identify methodologies for further improvement of Standards of the Charter in a manner of reaching the output and service standards of the Charter realistically, which is being implemented, these improvements had not taken place in any Divisional Secretariat.

**(c) Management of Changes**

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The Citizen Charter is a concept that should be dynamically changed. That is; in the commencement and implementation of the Citizen Charter, studies, analyses as well as planning should be continuously carried out. In terms of provisions of Administration Circulars issued relating to the implementation of the Citizen Charter, it was not ensured that supervision and follow up had taken place in an adequate manner since the year 2008 to check whether the services are successfully provided for the public, introduced by the Citizen Charter. If it was so done, it will assist in providing services for the public by Divisional Secretariats efficiently, effectively as well as qualitatively in a manner of ensuring the public credibility on the public service.

Even though the Public Administration Circular No. 05/2018(I) of 24 January 2018 had been issued emphasizing that the quality of the public service can be developed by updating the Citizen Charter, the Divisional Secretariats had not taken action to update those activities in a new different way.

**(d) Updating the Citizen Service Charter**

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In terms of Public Administration Circular No.05/2008 introduced for the implementation of the Citizen Charter, it has been informed that the Citizen Charter should be implemented with necessary amendments to perform functions of the public service efficiently, which are increased with the time and to develop proper understanding and credibility among related parties. It

had been further notified that the said necessity is emphasized in making evaluations on the performance of institutions which are subjected to supervision of the Committee on Public Accounts of Parliament of Sri Lanka. However, the Divisional Secretariats which were subjected to the examination, had not paid attention thereon.

### **3.2 Facilities needed for the office premises**

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#### **3.2.1 Well establishment of service standards**

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The Kaduwela Divisional Secretariat can be identified as one of 13 Divisional Secretariats of the Colombo District, with high productivity level and attractiveness. The organizational structure of the office premises has been properly arranged and a well-organized office premises has been constructed in the existing space. Moreover, the office premises have been maintained so as to provide a qualitative and efficient service for the public.

The public can obtain their services very easily and expeditiously due to establishment of the Social Service Division so as to facilitate the arrival of disabled persons, arranging queues at the place where vehicle licenses are issued, in a methodical and attractive manner to facilitate the public and reserving seats for them. Accordingly, it was observed that a proper management and a formal methodology is available in the Kaduwela Divisional Secretariat.



Place where vehicle licenses are issued (Kaduwela Divisional Secretariat)

### 3.2.2 Human Resources Management

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When comparing the approved cadre with the actual cadre of the entire staff of Divisional Secretariats, the total number of vacancies stood at 257 comprising of 04 at the senior level, 10 at the tertiary level, 235 at the secondary level and 08 at the primary level. Details are given in the following table.

Divisional Secretariat	Senior Level			Tertiary Level			Secondary Level			Primary Level			Total		
	Approved	Actual	Vacancies	Approved	Actual	Vacancies	Approved	Actual	Vacancies	Approved	Actual	Vacancies	Approved	Actual	Vacancies
Kaduwela	4	4	-	3	3	-	151	132	19	9	8	1	167	147	20
Dehiwala	4	4	-	4	2	2	76	68	8	8	9	-	92	83	10
Kesbewa	4	4	-	2	2	-	197	189	8	9	8	1	212	203	9
Sri Jayawardenepura	4	4	-	2	1	1	89	67	22	8	6	2	103	78	25
Colombo	5	5	-	2	2	-	132	106	26	14	12	2	153	125	28
Padukka	3	2	1	2	1	1	141	126	15	8	8	-	154	137	17
Ratmalana	4	3	1	2	1	1	71	59	12	7	7	-	84	70	14
Kolonnawa	1	-	1	6	4	2	139	95	44	11	10	1	157	109	48
Maharagama	4	4	-	2	2	-	136	128	8	8	7	1	150	141	9
Homagama	5	4	1	2	2	-	214	199	15	9	9	-	230	214	16
Moratuwa	4	4	-	3	2	1	131	114	17	9	9	-	147	129	18
Thimbirigasyaya	6	6	-	3	1	2	117	93	24	14	14	-	140	114	26
Seethawaka	4	4	-	2	2	-	190	172	18	9	9	-	205	187	17
<b>Total</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>1784</b>	<b>1548</b>	<b>236</b>	<b>123</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>1994</b>	<b>1737</b>	<b>257</b>

When providing the public with various services by Divisional Secretariats, adequately qualified officers should be recruited therefor. An efficient and effective service can be provided for the public through an adequate staff. Even though 1,784 officers at the secondary level had been approved for 13 Divisional Secretariats within the area of authority of the Colombo District, it was observed that the total number of vacancies in the entire staff of 13 Divisional Secretariats as at 31 October 2019 stood at 236 representing 13.2 per cent in relation to the approved staff at the secondary level. As such, it was observed that services cannot be provided efficiently and effectively for the public due to inadequate staff at the secondary level of Divisional Secretariats.

### **3.2.3 Physical Resources Management**

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When institutionalizing the Citizen Charter and determining the service standards, attention should be paid to the capacity of the institution, that is, on physical resources. However, it was observed that attention had not been paid to the capacity of the institution in implementing the Charter.

#### **3.2.3.1 Physical Resources available for the Staff**

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##### **(a) Physical Resources of the Homagama Divisional Secretariat**

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Adequate physical resources were not available with officers to perform functions of the Citizen Charter of the Homagama Divisional Secretariat with 11,816 hectares in extent, comprising the total population of 246,405, which is being subjected to urbanization at present and 81 Grama Niladhari Divisions and as a result, it was observed at the audit test check carried out that the clients are inconvenienced.

##### **(b) Facilities in the Record Room of the Homagama Divisional Secretariat**

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Information of the public should be protected by the installation of control systems such as CCTV Cameras and fire extinguishers to prevent sudden fire break outs and misplacing documents in the record rooms of

Pension Division, Division of issuing birth, death and marriage certificates and of other Divisions. Nevertheless, adequate action in this connection had not been taken accordingly.



Record Room of the Homagama Divisional Secretariat

**(c) Physical Facilities available at the Kolonnawa Divisional Secretariat**  
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- (i) It was observed that the Land Title Settlement Officer of the Kolonnawa Divisional Secretariat who take action on annual lease and long-term lease did not have a table adequate enough to unfold even a plan of a land and such work was being carried out with difficulties.
- (ii) Even though the Social Service Officer can improve the mental health of the recipients of allowances for elders, disabled persons, and ailments, the Social Service Officers do not have a conducive environment to discuss the issues of beneficiaries and to take action on such information protecting its privacy and confidentiality. As such, maximum service could not be provided to the general public due to the failure in counselling for the improvement of their mental health without being limited to the financial benefits. Moreover, there were no seating arrangements for several elders who came to meet the Social Service Officers.



**(d) Sri Jayawardenepura Kotte Divisional Secretariat**

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Lack of space within the premises of Divisional Secretariat was one of the major problems faced by the officers in carrying out duties.

**3.2.3.2 Physical Resources made available for the General Public**

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The following observations were made in the examination of physical resources of Divisional Secretariats made available for the general public.

**(a) Kolonnawa Divisional Secretariat**

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The population of Kolonnawa Divisional Secretariat Division where the settlements were extensively established since the year 1990, stood at 223,042 and it is comprised of 46 Grama Niladhari Divisions with a land of 27.3 square kilo meters in extent. Under the circumstances, it was observed that there was no adequate space within the Divisional Secretariat to perform the public service, thus the general public was facing difficulties. However, no action had been taken yet to provide adequate space.

**(b) Sri Jayawardenepura Kotte Divisional Secretariat**

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The population of the Sri Jayawardenepura Kotte Divisional Secretariat where the main administrative capital of Sri Lanka is situated, had been 116,295 and it is comprised of 20 Grama Niladhari Divisions with a land of 16.74 square kilo meters in extent. Since the official motor vehicles owned by the Sri Jayawardenepura Kotte Divisional Secretariat have been parked blocking the main front gate at the entrance to the said Divisional Secretariat, it was observed that the persons with disabilities who come to obtain the services were facing difficulties when entering the office.



The vehicles parked blocking the main gate

### 3.3 Performance of Public Service

#### 3.3.1 Issue of the Copies of Certificates of Births, Marriages and Deaths

The Registrar Division is being maintained by the Divisional Secretariat with the intention of issuing certified copies of the certificates of births, marriages, deaths, Kandyan marriage and divorce and Muslim divorce. The procedure to be followed by the Divisional Secretariat in issuing the copies of certificates of births, marriages and deaths has been stated in the guidelines of the Divisional Secretariat.

Since adequate facilities to perform the functions in coordination with the Divisional Secretariats are not being provided by the Divisional Secretariats and relevant Departments, it was observed that the Registrar General's Department was facing difficulties in performing the said services. The details were as follows.

#### Physical facilities available at Registrar Divisions

- (i) It was observed that the Registrar Division of the Homagama Divisional Secretariat is functioning at an old house with serious difficulties such as lack of adequate light and ventilation required to carry out the duties while the Registrar Division of the Sri Jayawardenepura Kotte Divisional Secretariat was functioning within a limited space under minimum facilities without even required office equipment.



Registrar Division of the Sri Jayawardenepura Kotte Divisional Secretariat



Registrar Division of the Homagama Divisional Secretariat

- (ii) It was observed that there were no Safes to keep the money obtained for issuing birth certificates and other certificates and the physical resources (such as computers) required to provide services were not adequate.

### 3.3.2 Issue of Revenue Licenses

Revenue licenses are being issued by Divisional Secretariats for the motor vehicles belonging to the relevant Divisional Secretariat with the intention of

earning Government revenue. In issuing revenue licenses for motor vehicles, the office of the Commissioner of Motor Traffic can be identified as the related party. The procedure to be followed by the Divisional Secretariat in issuing revenue licenses for motor vehicles was stated in the Guidelines for Divisional Secretariats.

**(a) Physical Facilities available at the Division of Issuing Revenue Licenses**

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- (i) The Division of issuing licenses for motor vehicles has been located in front of the ground floor of the Sri Jayawardenepura Kotte Divisional Secretariat. Since the said Division has been situated close to the main road, the general public has to face many difficulties due to the lack of space for waiting until the service is provided. Further, the Counter for levying the Carbon Tax has also been located within a limited space in the place of issuing licenses. As such, it was observed that the officers who perform duties and also the general public who came to obtain the service had to face difficulties.



In front of the place of issuing revenue licenses for motor vehicles and levying Carbon Tax

- (ii) Glasses of the Counters made for the issue of revenue licenses and levying of Carbon Tax in the Homagama Divisional Secretariat, had been installed causing inconvenience to the conversation between the general public and the public officer while it has been made as to converse through a small

window inconveniently. As such, it was observed that the general public has no opportunity to express their opinions in a friendly manner.



Place of issuing revenue licenses for motor vehicles and levying Carbon Tax

**(b) Inquiring Public Opinions**

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It was observed in the audit of 08 Divisional Secretariats relating to the sample of performance audit that there were instances of causing inconvenience to the general public in providing public service by those Secretariats. When inquiring the public opinions on the services provided by the Homagama Divisional Secretariat, the following public opinions were revealed.

- (i) Lack of proper arrangement for general public in approaching the service counters.
- (ii) When providing services, failure in conversing with the general public in a courteous manner and failure in making them aware by the public officers who provide services.
- (iii) Causing inconvenience to the general public due to lack of change money.

### 3.3.3 Social Services

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The Officers referred to the Divisional Secretariats by the Department of Social Services can be found in every Divisional Secretariat. Aids such as assistance for Education, assistance for the aged, assistance for ailments, and assistance for the public are made using the Western Provincial Fund and the Decentralized fund through the Social Services Divisions established in Divisional Secretariats .It was observed that the officers of this division of Divisional Secretariats such as Kolonnawa, Kesbewa, Kaduwela and Sriyawardanapura Kotte, were carrying out their duties dedicatedly related and the Thimbirigasyaya Divisional Secretariat's dedication in carrying out these duties remained very low when compared with the above Divisional Secretariats.

For instance the following tasks had been performed by the Social Services Officer of the Kolonnawa Divisional Secretariat.

- (a) Since the money supplied by the Government for social services work was not sufficient, the activities related to satisfying the educational needs of students and paving the way for extending further assistance to the disabled are being successfully carried out by the Social Services Officer by obtaining assistance from well-wishing pensioners and other philanthropists.
- (b) Students who are mentally retarded and currently not attending school and receiving disabled assistance, study only two days per week and the services of a volunteer teacher have been enlisted for giving education to these students. Education activities had been carried out only for two days per week at a temple in the area owing to the fact that there is no proper place to give education all five days of the week in a such a way that enable these disabled children to attend to their works all by themselves.

### 3.3.4 Promotion of Child Rights

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#### (a) Services Performed by the officers referred to the Divisional Secretariats by Department of Probation and Child Care

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Officers have been attached to Divisional Secretariats as per national policies and international standards to ensure the protection of rights of all children and giving equal opportunities for them including abandoned and helpless children and those children who have been faced with legal issues. They are carrying out activities such as promotion of attitudes and skills of children living in the Divisional Secretariat, minimizing child abuse and maltreatment, getting back to school those children who are not attending school and ensuring the protection of child rights.

#### (b) Children not Attending School and Spread of Drug Menace

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- (i) Although the Divisional secretariats are taking actions to get those children from low income families who are not attending school to go back to schools by providing school equipment and fulfilling other requirements needed for going back to schools, the attendance at school by these low income family students remains very low since parents are not very concerned and interested in getting them to regularly attend schools. Since these students don't have good education and values it has been difficult to get them to come for a awareness programme to educate them on the importance of education. Further, since this drug menace is prevalent in schools they are attending, students are naturally encouraged to pay their attention towards this. It was observed that actions had been taken in this regard by coordinating with the Police and other related institutions. Further it was observed at the audit that the environment children

are living in is insecure and both male and female children are subjected to social abuses.

- (ii) Although counseling officers of the Moratuwa Divisional Secretariat have been able to get these children to come for awareness programmes, they don't show much interest to be educated on these matters and even the parents themselves don't seem to exhibit any interest to be educated on the security and protection of children. In most instances, fathers of these families are addicted to drugs and the family is sustained with the mere amounts mother earns through the small self-employment she engages in.
- (iii) Such being the existing social environment, children are compelled to illegally get married before reaching their legally marriageable age which is 18 in Sri Lanka and the children born out of such marriages are forced to experience many issues as well. Newly born children of such marriages do not have birth certificates by reason of their parents not possessing legal marriage certificates since they have been married before the age of 18. The fact that these children don't possess birth certificates or probable age certificates when they reach the school going age or their parents unwillingness to send them to school even under these circumstances has forced the children to fall prey to the unhealthy vicious cycle that exists in this society.
- (iv) This is a big social issue prevalent in this area and it is certain to become even bigger issue and the need of the Government's intervention is very much felt to turn this situation towards a better one. The need of effecting social reforms starting from handing severe punishments for drug dealers is very much felt. A picture here bellow drawn by a child displayed at an art exhibition held to build awareness seems to thus awakens the society.





A picture drawn by a child at an art exhibition

The following are the issues mostly existing in this society occurred due to early marriages.

- Disruption of education
- Economic problems
- Deprivation of childhood
- Quarrels among spouses
- Infant deaths
- Mental stress
- failure of married life

Moreover, Counseling Services are carrying out activities such as referring drugs addicted children to the Rehabilitation Centers and conducting of awareness programmes for such children. And, however, the people are unwilling to obtain these services offered by the Government and enticing them to obtain such services has become a difficult task also.

**(c) Exemplary services done by the Child Rights Promotion Officer**

Child Rights Promotion Officer, by Obtaining the services of resource persons and without the assistance of the Government, has conducted additional classes in 2018 for about 25 children showing low literacy level of We/Jaya/Siri perakumba Collage in Obesekarapura ,Rajagiriya in the Sri Jayawardanapura Kotte Divisional Secretariat. This officer said that the literacy rate of those students has increased because of these additional classes. Going beyond her remit of official duties the exceptional service this officer does for children with lot of dedication and enthusiasm should be appreciated and there was no evidence as to a similar service being rendered from other Divisional Secretariats.



Programmes conducted by the Child Rights Promotion Officer

**3.3.5 Development of Early childhood**

There about 94 Early Childhood Development Centers in the Divisional Secretariat Division of Colombo and lack of sufficient security and protection for children and lack of teachers trained in early childhood

activities has created problems. The following are the issues affecting these centers.

- (a) Lack of sufficient space in Early Childhood Development Centers.
- (b) Lack of secure equipment and sufficient space for children to play
- (c) Most teachers serving in these Early Childhood Development Centers don't possess necessary qualifications.
- (d) Over enthusiasm to write only letters in Early Childhood Development Centers.
- (e) Lack of facilities for children.

Although various programmes have been conducted through Divisional Secretariats by Early Childhood Development Officers and Child Rights Development Officers, the knowledge and experience obtained from such programs are likely to be rarely put into practical use in the society. Encouragement from parents to continuously push children towards school education is much less and it is obvious that the children are either compelled or referred to take up various jobs which are not accepted by a disciplined society and this has become huge social disaster in these areas. Accordingly, children are used as agents to transport drugs and economic gains are thereby made by their parents. Further children get largely addicted to drugs as well while parents are not interested in saving their children from it. Therefore, although counseling sessions are conducted by the Divisional Secretariats, their success remains at a minimum level.

Insufficiency of annual provisions allocated for early childhood development programmes and child rights protection programmes and the lack of technological equipment (computers, photocopiers)

For officers engaging in these activities have stood in the way to make these efforts fully successful.

### 3.3.6 Controlling the Drug Menace

#### (a) Children not attending School and Divisions in which Drug menace has spread

According to information provided by Administrative Grama Niladhari Officers regarding children addicted to drugs and children not attending schools in the 13 Divisional Secretariat Divisions in Colombo district, it was observed that there were 489 divisions in which drug menace had been spread and also there were about 529 cases of children not attending school.

<b>Divisional Secretariat</b>	<b>Number of Grama Niladhari Divisions</b>	<b>Number of Drugs Prevalent Divisions</b>	<b>Number of Children not Attending School (approximately)</b>
Colombo	35	35	210
Thimbirigasyaya	20	15	23
Kolonnawa	46	44	54
Sri Jayawardenapura Kotte	20	13	Nil
Kaduwela	57	57	25
Maharagama	41	27	Nil
Homagama	81	71	02
Padukka	46	43	05
Kesbewa	73	71	11
Moratuwa	42	23	95
Ratmalana	13	12	55
Dehiwala	15	12	Nil
Seethawaka	68	66	49
<b>Total</b>	<b><u>557</u></b>	<b><u>489</u></b>	<b><u>529</u></b>

The total number of Grama Niladhari Divisions in the 13 Divisional Secretariat areas of the Colombo District is 557 and according to the information furnished to audit, drug use was prevalent in 489 or 88 per cent of the Grama Niladhari Divisions in the Colombo District. It was accordingly observed that the whole society was in a great crisis over this situation.

**(b) Distribution of Out-of-school children and drugs in the Colombo Divisional Secretary's Division**

Drug distribution has taken place in all 35 Grama Niladhari Divisions of the Colombo Divisional Secretary's Division and the number of out- of- school children in this area is approximately 210. Although the Divisional Secretariat in collaboration with the Child Rights Promotion Officers provided the necessary school equipment and clothing to these children to attend in school, due to the reasons such as negative attitudes of parents towards their children's education, mothers going abroad, having children in the care of other guardians and their negligence towards their children's education; imprisonment of parents, reluctance of principals to re-admit the children who have dropped out of school due to various reasons; children's reluctance to go to school due to their addiction to various forms of abuse to earn money (drug use, drug trafficking, acting as the intermediaries in drug trafficking, raising creatures such as pigeons for selling) father's drug addiction and breaking down of the family for various reasons, the audit observed that these children were unable to attend school continuously.

**3.3.7 Shortcomings in Regional Administrative Services**

It was observed that Grama Niladharis who are in direct contact with the public regarding regional administration did not have adequate facilities to render their service. The problems in this regard are as follows.

**(a) Lack of a Grama Niladhari office relating to the Grama Niladhari Division**

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According to the information regarding the lack of a suitable place to maintain office activities in respect of 13 Divisional Secretariats, there observed 248 divisions without suitable offices to maintain office activities. Details appear below.

<b>Divisional Secretariat</b>	<b>Number of Grama Niladhari Divisions</b>	<b>Number of Divisions without suitable offices to maintain office activities</b>
-----	-----	-----
Colombo	35	24
Thimbirigasyaya	20	19
Kolonnawa	46	36
Sri Jayawardenapura Kotte	20	11
Kaduwela	57	17
Maharagama	41	23
Homagama	81	07
Padukka	46	22
Kesbewa	73	55
Moratuwa	42	21
Ratmalana	13	-
Dehiwala	15	04
Seethawaka	68	09
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Total	<u>557</u>	<u>248</u>

The Grama Niladhari offices are maintained at the places such as in the rooms of private houses, part of the community hall, the Dharma Shala of the temples, the society halls and the private shops. Grama Niladharis have to move from place to place carrying their documents and equipment when these temporary places are needed for the use of the respective owners. It was observed that the Grama

Niladharis were unable to carry out their office duties properly and the public were also greatly inconvenienced due to this condition.

**(b) Maintenance of a formal information system by the Grama Niladharis at the village level**

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A system for maintaining a proper information system to be maintained by Grama Niladharis as per Grama Niladhari Guidelines including the particulars such as Government Land Register, information on pensioners, Samurdhi recipients, Elderly Assistance, Livelihood Assistance, Assistance for Ailments and the information on the disabled etc. needed to be utilized for welfare activities at rural level had not been planned and implemented by providing the technical equipment. As a result, there was a weakness in the effective and prompt implementation of decisions taken at the state level for the benefit of the people.

**(c) Communication and technical facilities available to Grama Niladharis**

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Likely, due to the lack of proper offices, facilities such as telephones and faxes cannot be provided and the public has to wait until the relevant date expecting the Grama Niladhari to inform the public about any relevant duty. At a time when new technology is at an advanced stage with electronic communication, the low level of communication in the local administration is one of the major problems we face as a country. Therefore, this situation is required to be changed and the communication methods and technology should continue to be available to these offices and in order to provide such facilities, there is a dire need for the Grama Niladharis to have a permanent place of work without having mobile offices.

**(d) Other shortcomings recognized**

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- (i) Availability of dilapidated desks and chairs for maintaining office activities.
- (ii) Lack of technical equipment.
- (iii) Lack of sanitation facilities.
- (iv) Lack of adequate space for the public to wait until their duties are completed as well as lack of seating facilities.
- (v) Lack of training programs on new technology and office methods
- (vi) Lack of adequate office stationery.

### 3.4 General Observations

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#### **Environmental Conservation**

- (a) Moratuwa Divisional Secretariat is a division which is rapidly undergoing urbanization and settlement. The land use of this division is primarily for commercial, trade and residential purposes and the contribution to the agricultural sector is minimal. The Bolgoda River, which flows through 21 Grama Niladhari Divisions, beautifies the city of Moratuwa, and it is highly beneficial to protect the ecological balance, preserve biodiversity and sustain human existence economically and socially. A number of problems had also arisen in connection with these water sources existing in this area.
  
- (b) Unauthorized land reclamation and construction in the Bolgoda Environmental Protection Area gazetted as an Environmental Protection Area in terms of Sections 24 (c) and 24 (d) of the National Environmental Act No. 47 of 1980, damaging the biodiversity by destruction of mangrove ecology in the river, unauthorized dumping of waste into water sources, growth and proliferation of destructive aquatic plants such as salvinia and Water Hyacinth, and illegal sand mining have rendered this ecosystem threatened with extinction. It was observed during the audit that the Moratuwa Divisional Secretariat had not paid adequate attention on this matter.



#### 4. Recommendations

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- (a) To display the Citizens' Charter with relevant amendments in every office and make the public aware of the services available at the Divisional Secretariats so as to provide a more efficient and effective service to the public.
- (b) To conduct State-sponsored community awareness campaigns on the effects of drug use and to refer the addicts for rehabilitation process to prevent drug addiction from children to adults which has become a common problem for all Grama Niladharis of the Colombo District Secretary's Division.
- (c) To make the officials aware of the Citizens' Charter and display information required to educate the public. (billboards, through websites).
- (d) To make arrangements to provide a permanent suitable office in the Grama Niladhari Divisions for the Grama Niladharis to carry out their duties with the intervention of the Government.
- (e) Establishment of an accurate and efficient information system required for Grama Niladharis to make administrative decisions for the benefit of the public by providing them with the technical equipment and other requirements required to maintain a proper information system at Grama Niladhari Division level.
- (f) Provision of space and facilities required to perform duties in the Divisional Secretariats.

- (g) Provision of proper trained and experienced teachers to the existing Early Childhood Development Centers in the area and expansion of the supervision carried out by the Divisional Secretariats regarding the Early Childhood Development Centers.
  
- (h) Drawing attention to the carry out supervision of day care centers maintained in the Colombo District Secretary's Division by the Divisional Secretariats.

**Sgd./W.P.C. Wickramaratne**  
**Auditor General**

W.P.C. Wickramaratne  
Auditor General

31 December 2020