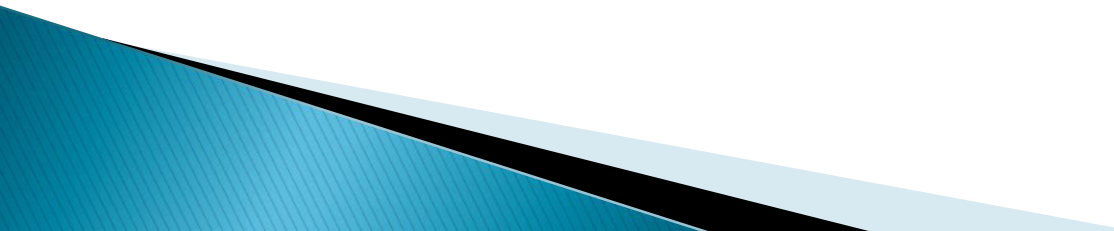


*Registrar Administration  
as an Appellate Authority  
for  
RTI queries-  
Role & Responsibility*

*Be aware of the Actions taken*  
*Be aware of the Actions prohibited*  
*Be aware of the Denial of action*  
*The intricacies of actions are very mysterious.*

**Chapter 4, Verse 17**  
**Bhagvat Gita**




*The Real 'Swaraj' will come not by the acquisition of authority by a few but by the acquisition of capacity by all to resist authority when abused.*

**– Mahatma Gandhi**

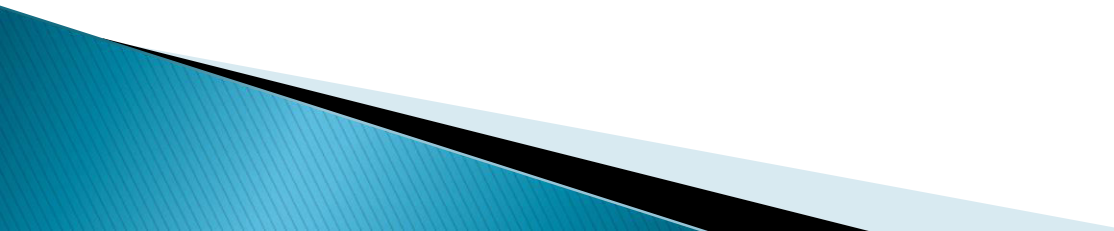


# *Introduction*

- ▶ **Information** is an **inalienable** and **natural right** of every **human being**.
  - ▶ In a democratic country each person has the right to freedom of opinion and expression.
  - ▶ **‘Right to Information’** (RTI) refers to the right of every citizen to access information held by or under the control of public authorities.
  - ▶ **Information is crucial for good governance as it reflects and captures Government activities and processes.**
- 

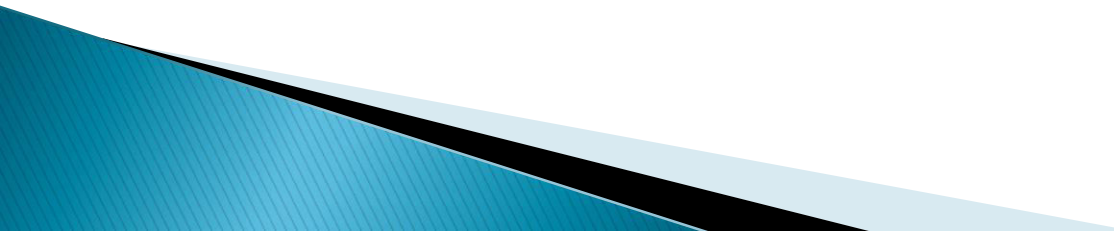
- ▶ If people do not know what is happening in their society, if the actions of those who rule them are hidden, then they cannot take a meaningful part in the affairs of the society.
- ▶ **Access to information** not only promotes openness, transparency and accountability in administration, but also facilitates **active participation** of people in the democratic **governance process**.
- ▶ Public participation in Government, respect for the rule of law, freedom of expression and association, transparency and accountability, legitimacy of Government, and the like which are the **core values of good governance**, can be realised only if the right to information is implemented in the right spirit.

*Information is the oxygen of  
democracy*



# *United Nation & Right to Information*

- ▶ “Freedom of information is a fundamental human right and the touchstone for all freedoms to which the United Nations is consecrated.”
- ▶ **Article 19** of **Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948** (UDHR) states that : “Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.”

- ▶ **The International Covenant of Civil and Political Rights, 1966**. Article 19 (2) : “Everyone shall have the right to freedom of expression; this right shall include freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through any other media of his choice.”
- 



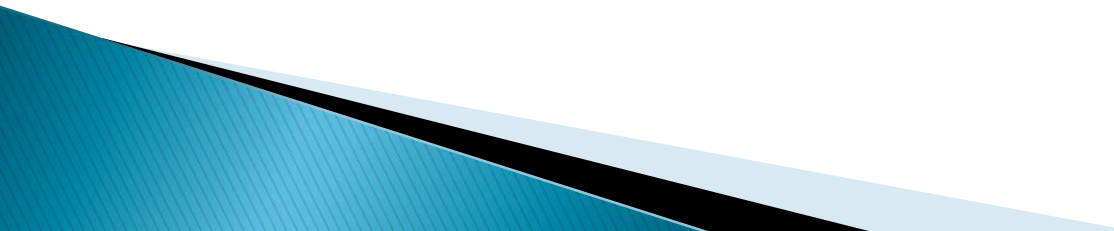
# *UN Principles on Freedom of Information*

## *(2000)*

- ▶ The principle of 'maximum disclosure' is most important one. Freedom of information implies that there is an obligation on public bodies to publish and disseminate widely documents of significant public interest. At a minimum, the law should make provisions for public education and the dissemination of information regarding the right, and include mechanisms to address the problem of a culture of secrecy within government.
- ▶ All public bodies should be required to establish open, accessible internal systems for ensuring the public's right to receive information. The law should establish a presumption that all meetings of governing bodies are open to the public. There should be protection for whistle-blowers. The World Conference on Human Rights, held in Vienna in 1993 has declared that Right to freedom of expression is regarded as closely linked to the right to development. Access to information in Article 13 is also a central element of the UN Convention Against Corruption (2003).

- ▶ *International Right to Know Day*  
- *September 28th of each year.*

# *Table of National Access to Information Laws Around the World*

- ▶ This table lists only those countries with a specific national law or national subordinate legislation. The list excludes territories, states or regions which have their own substantive right to information law.
- 

COUNTRY	YEAR	TITLE OF THE INFORMATION ACCESS LAW
ALBANIA	1999	Law on the Right to Information for Official Documents
ANGOLA	2002	Law on Access to Administrative Documents
ANTIGUA & BARBUDA	2004	Freedom of Information Act
ARMENIA	2003	Law of the Republic of Armenia on Freedom of Information
ARGENTINA	2003	Access to Public Information Regulation
AUSTRALIA	1982	Freedom of Information Act
AUSTRIA	1987	Federal Law on the Duty to Furnish Information
AZERBAIJAN	2005	The Law on Right to Obtain Information
BELGIUM	1994	Law on Access to Administrative Documents held by Federal Public Authorities
BELIZE	1994	The Freedom of Information Act
BOSNIA & HERZEGOVINA	2001	The Freedom of Access to Information Act
BULGARIA	2000	Access to Public Information Act
CANADA	1983	The Access to Information Act
CHINA	2007	Ordinance on Openness of Government Information
COLOMBIA	1985	Law Ordering the Publicity of Official Acts and Documents
CROATIA	2003	Act on the Right of Access to Information
CZECH REPUBLIC	1999	Law on Free Access to Information
DENMARK	1985	Access to Public Administration Files Act
DOMINICAN REPUBLIC	2004	Law on Access to Information

<b>ECUADOR</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>Organic Law on Transparency and Access to Public Information</b>
ESTONIA	2000	Public Information Act
FINLAND	1999	Act on Openness of Government Activities
FRANCE	1978	Law on Access to Administrative Documents
GEORGIA	1999	General Administrative Code of Georgia
GERMANY	2005	Act to Regulate Access to Federal Government Information
GREECE	1999	Code of Administrative Procedure
HONDURAS	2006	The Law on Transparency and Access to Public Information
HUNGARY	1992	Act on Protection of Personal Data and Disclosure of Data of Public Interest
ICELAND	1996	Information Act
INDIA	2005	The Right to Information Act
INDONESIA	2008	Freedom of Information Act
IRELAND	1997	Freedom of Information Act
ISRAEL	1998	Freedom of Information Law
ITALY	1990	Law on Administrative Procedure and Access to Administrative Documents
JAMAICA	2002	Access to Information Act
JAPAN	1999	Law Concerning Access to information Held by Administrative Organs
SOUTH KOREA	1996	Act on Disclosure of Information by Public Agencies
LATVIA	1998	Law on Freedom of Information

<b>LITHUANIA</b>	<b>1996</b>	<b>Law on the Provision of Information to the Public</b>
MACEDONIA	2006	Law on Free Access to Information of Public Character
MEXICO	2002	Federal Law of Transparency and Access to Public Government Information
MOLDOVA	2000	The Law on Access to Information
MONTENEGRO	2005	Law on Free Access to Information
NETHERLANDS	1991	Government Information (Public Access) Act
NEW ZEALAND	1982	Official Information Act
NORWAY	1970	The Freedom of information Act
PAKISTAN	2002	Freedom of information Ordinance
PANAMA	2002	Law on Transparency in Public Administration
PERU	2003	Law of Transparency and Access to Public Information
POLAND	2001	Law on Access to Public Information
PORTUGAL	1993	Law of Access to Administrative Documents
ROMANIA	2001	Law Regarding Free Access to Information of Public Interest
SAINT VINCENT &THEGRENADINES	2003	Freedom of Information Act
SERBIA	2004	Law on Free Access to Information of Public Importance
SLOVAKIA	2000	Act on Free Access to Information
SLOVENIA	2003	Act on Access to Information of Public Character
SOUTH AFRICA	2000	Promotion of Access to Information Act

SPAIN	1992	Law on Rules for Public Administration
SWEDEN	1766	Freedom of the Press Act
SWITZERLAND	2004	Federal Law on the Principle of Administrative Transparency
TAJIKISTAN	2002	Law of the Republic of Tajikistan on Information
THAILAND	1997	Official Information Act
TRINIDAD & TOBAGO	1999	Freedom of Information Act
TURKEY	2003	Law on the Right to Information
UGANDA	2005	The Access to Information Act
UKRAINE	1992	Law on Information
UK	2000	Freedom of Information Act
USA	1966	Freedom of Information Act
UZBEKISTAN	2002	Law on Principles and Guarantees of Freedom of Information
ZIMBABWE	2002	Access to Information and Privacy Protection Act

# *Historical Background Of Right To Information*

- ▶ The historical background of the Right to Information can be traced in Five different stages. They are :-
- ▶ Right to Information before the Indian Constitution,
- ▶ Right to Information after the Constitution of India,
- ▶ Right to Information Movement in India,
- ▶ Right to Information and the Judiciary and
- ▶ Right to Information Act, 2005.



# *Right to Information before the Indian*

## *Constitution*

- ▶ **The Indian Penal Code 1860:-** Though the Indian Penal Code 1860 does not deal explicitly with a citizens Right to Information as the Indian Evidence Act 1872 does, it however contains various provisions which have close bearing on the responsibility of a public servant to provide correct information to the public, failing which the public servant concerned is liable to punishment for his acts of omission and commission in this regard.
- ▶ **The Indian Evidence Act, 1872:-** The Evidence Act 1872 in its **Section 74** provides a sweeping definition of public documents. Further the Evidence Act in its **Section 76** (certified copies of public documents) says, every public officer having the custody of a public document which any person has a right to inspect, shall give that person on demand a copy of it on payment of the legal fees. The same Evidence Act in its **Sections 123 and 124** makes the citizens right to information absolutely discretionary on the part of the Government servants.
- ▶ **Official Secrets Act, 1923:-** The right to information in India is restricted by the Official Secrets Act which is a colonial hangover from the past before the Constitution of India. A colonial culture of secrecy has permeated every government structure that severely encroaches upon our right to be informed and to get information from the government departments.

# *Right to Information after the Indian Constitution*

- ▶ While there is no specific right to information or even right to freedom of the press in the Constitution of India, the right to information has been read into the Constitutional guarantees which are a part of the Chapter on Fundamental Rights. The Indian Constitution has an impressive array of basic and inalienable rights contained in Chapter Three of the Constitution. These include the Right to Equal Protection of the Laws and the Right to Equality Before the Law (**Article 14**), the Right to Freedom of Speech and Expression (**Article 19 (1)(a)**) and the Right to Life and Personal Liberty (**Article 21**).
- ▶ **Article 19(1) (a) of the Constitution guarantees the fundamental rights to free speech and expression. The prerequisite for enjoying this right is knowledge and information.**
- ▶ Therefore, the **Right to Information** becomes a **constitutional right**, being an aspect of the right to free speech and expression which includes the right to receive and collect information.

# *Right to Information Movement in India*

- ▶ The movement for the right to information was started in early 1990s by **Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sangathan** (which literally means ‘organisation for the empowerment of workers and peasants’) in remote village **Devdungri** (Rajsamand district, Rajasthan). It was a movement to expose corruption in the famine relief work by demanding information related to copies of bills, vouchers and muster rolls for workers recorded in government files. Following a period of struggle, MKSS succeeded in acquiring photocopies of the relevant documents in which the siphoning of funds was clearly evident. The successful experiments of exposing corruption through access to information was good learning experience for civil society, led to the demand of enactment of RTI law in Rajasthan. **Government of Rajasthan yielded to pressure of movement and enacted the law in 2000.**
- ▶ Success of struggle of MKSS led to the genesis of a broader discourse on the right to information in India and RTI laws were enacted in some states of India. The demand for national law started under the leadership of National Campaign on People’s Right to Information (NCPRI). **In 1996, the Press Council of India headed by Justice P B Sawant presented a draft model law on right to information to the Government of India.** A working group (**Shourie Committee**) under the chairmanship of **Mr. H D Shourie** was set up by the **Central Government** and given the mandate to prepare draft legislation on freedom of information. The **Shourie Committee’s Report** and draft law were published in 1997. Eventually, the Shourie Committee draft law was reworked into the **Freedom of Information Bill (FOI) 2000**, which was **passed in the Parliament in 2002** but it was **not notified**. However, civil society raised several objections to FOI bill and suggested amendments to National Advisory Council. **As a result of long drawn struggle of civil society; the RTI was enacted in 2005 in India.** Dr.Sudhir Naib, “Right to Information Act in India”, at [www.rtiindia.org](http://www.rtiindia.org), visited on 06-02-2014.

# *Right to Information and the Judiciary*

- ▶ On the emerging concept of an 'open government' the Constitution Bench of Supreme Court in '**State of UP V. Raj Narain**' held that the **people of this country have a right to know every public act, everything, that is done in a public way, by their public functionaries.** AIR 1975 SC 865.
- ▶ In '**S.P Gupta V. President of India**' the Supreme Court Constitution Bench held that the **concept of an open government is the direct emanation from the right to know** which seems to be implicit in the right of free speech and expression guaranteed under Article 19(1)(a). AIR 1982 SC 149.
- ▶ In '**Reliance Petrochemicals Limited V. Properties of Indian Express Newspapers Bombay (P) Limited**' the Supreme Court held that **the right to information is a fundamental right under Article 21 of the Constitution.** (1988) 4 SCC 592.
- ▶ In '**People's Union for Civil Liberties V. Union of India**' the Supreme Court held that right to information is a facet of the right to freedom of speech and expression as contained in Article 19(1)(a) of the Constitution of India. It was also held that **right to information is definitely a fundamental right.** (2004) 2 SCC 476.
- ▶ **Article 19 (1)(a)** which spells the freedom of speech and expression as observed in *Indian Express Newspapers Bombay Ltd V. Union Of India*, also covers the following perceptions:
  - ▶ It helps and individual to attain self fulfillment
  - ▶ It assists in discovery of truth
  - ▶ It strengthens the capacity of an individual in participating in decision making
  - ▶ It provides a mechanism by which it would be possible to establish a reasonable balance between stability and social change.

# *Right to Information Act, 2005*

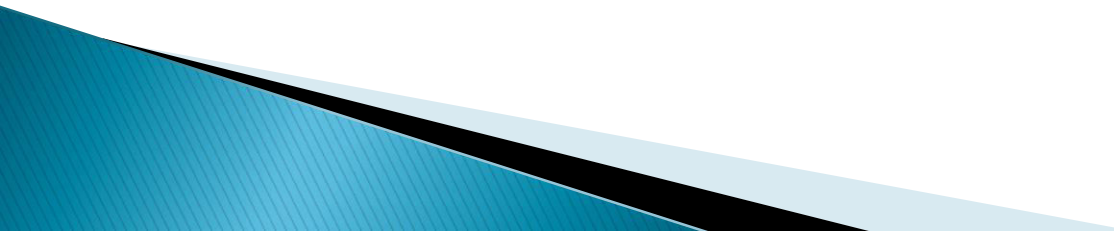
- ▶ The *Right to Information Act 2005 (RTI)* is an Act of the *Parliament of India* "*to provide for setting out the practical regime of right to information for citizens.*" The Act applies to all States and Union Territories of India, except the State of Jammu and Kashmir - which is covered under a State-level law. This law was passed by Parliament on 15 June 2005 and came fully into force on 13 October 2005. Information disclosure in India was hitherto restricted by the *Official Secrets Act 1923* and various other special laws, which the new RTI Act now relaxes.



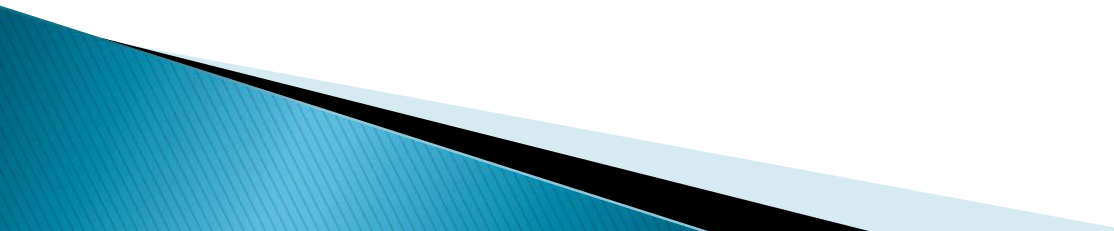
# *Object of the Right to Information Act*

- ▶ Evidently, the major objectives of the Act are:
- ▶ i) *Greater Transparency* in functioning of public authorities.
- ▶ ii) Improvement in *accountability* and performance of the Government.
- ▶ iii) Promotion of *partnership between citizens and the Government* in decision making process; and
- ▶ iv) *Reduction in corruption* in the Government departments.
- ▶ All these parameters are critical *elements of good governance*.

# *What is Information?*

- ▶ Information is any material in any form. It includes records, documents, memos, e-mails, opinions, advices, press releases, circulars, orders, logbooks, contracts, reports, papers, samples, models, data material held in any electronic form. It also includes information relating to any private body which can be accessed by the public authority under any law for the time being in force.
- 

# *Right to Information under the Act*

- ▶ Inspection of work, documents, records
  - ▶ Taking notes, extracts, or certified copies of documents or records
  - ▶ Taking certified samples of material
  - ▶ Obtaining information in the form of diskettes, floppies, tapes, video cassettes or in any other electronic mode or through printouts where such information is stored in a computer or in any other device
- 



# *Duty Corresponding To The Right*

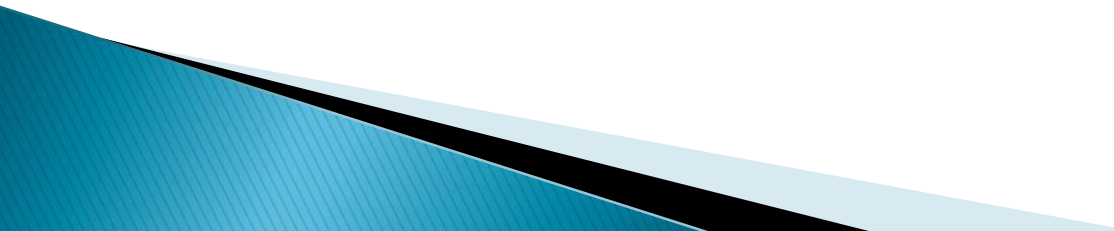
- ▶ Different terminology has been used . freedom of information, access to information, the right to Know, but fundamentally, the concept remains the same. At the heart of the right to information are two key concepts:

The right of the public to request access to information and the corresponding duty on the government to meet the request, unless specific, defined exemptions apply;

The duty of the government to proactively provide certain key information, even in the absence of a request.

Public bodies have an obligation to disclose information and every member of the public has a corresponding right to receive information. Public bodies should publish and widely disseminate documents of significant public interest .A refusal to disclose information may not be based on trying to protect government from embarrassment or the exposure of wrongdoing.

# *Obligations of Public Authorities*

- ▶ Every public authority shall maintain all its records duly catalogued and indexed in a manner and form, which facilitates the right to information
  - ▶ Shall also publish the information of the organization regarding structure, functions and duties, procedure followed, decision making process, directory of officers and employees, names and designations of public information officers etc.,
- 

# *Public Information Officer*

- ▶ Public authorities have designated some of its officers as Public Information Officer. They are responsible to give information to a person who seeks information under the RTI Act.

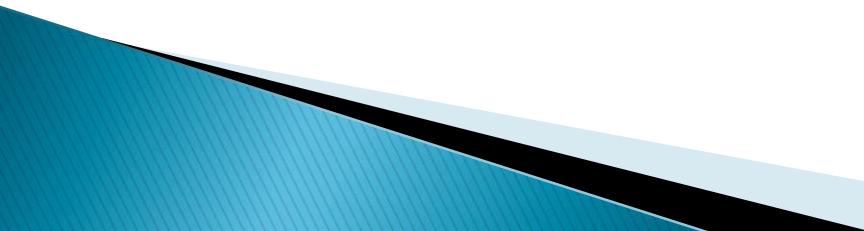
# *What is the Application Procedure for requesting information?*

- ▶ 1. Apply in writing or through electronic means in English or Hindi or in the official language of the area, to the PIO, specifying the particulars of the information sought for.
- ▶ 2. Reason for seeking information are not required to be given;
- ▶ 3. Pay fees as may be prescribed (if not belonging to the below poverty line category).

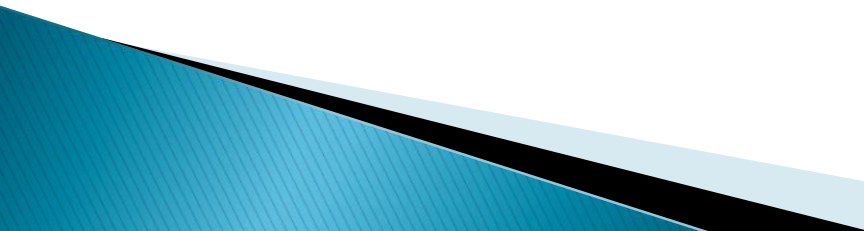
# *What is the time limit to get the information?*

- ▶ 1. 30 days from the date of application
- ▶ 2. 48 hours for information concerning the life and liberty of a person
- ▶ 3. 5 days shall be added to the above response time, in case the application for information is given to Assistant Public Information Officer.
- ▶ 4. If the interests of a third party are involved then time limit will be 40 days (maximum period + time given to the party to make representation).
- ▶ 5. Failure to provide information within the specified period is a deemed refusal.

# *What is the fee?*

- ▶ 1. Application fees to be prescribed which must be reasonable.
  - ▶ 2. If further fees are required, then the same must be intimated in writing with calculation details of how the figure was arrived at;
  - ▶ 3. Applicant can seek review of the decision on fees charged by the PIO by applying to the appropriate Appellate Authority;
  - ▶ 4. No fees will be charged from people living below the poverty line
  - ▶ 5. Applicant must be provided information free of cost if the PIO fails to comply with the prescribed time limit.
- 

# *What could be the ground for rejection?*

- ▶ 1. If it is covered by exemption from disclosure.
    - National security
    - Trade secret/ IPR/ copy right
    - Privacy
    - Foreign relation
    - Danger to life & physical safety
    - Impede the investigation
    - Cabinet papers
    - Public interest v/s protected interests
  
  - ▶ 2. If it infringes copyright of any person other than the State.
- 

# *Supply of Information to Associations etc*

- ▶ The Act gives the right to information only to the citizens of India. It does not make provision for giving information to Corporations, Associations, Companies etc. which are legal entities/persons, but not citizens. However, if an application is made by an employee or office-bearer of any Corporation, Association, Company, NGO etc. indicating his name and such employee/office bearer is a citizen of India, information may be supplied to him/her.



# *Assistance Available to the Applicant*

- ▶ If a person is unable to make a request in writing, he may seek the help of the Public Information Officer to write his application and the Public Information Officer should render him reasonable assistance. Where a decision is taken to give access to a sensorily disabled person to any document, the Public Information Officer, shall provide such assistance to the person as may be appropriate for inspection.

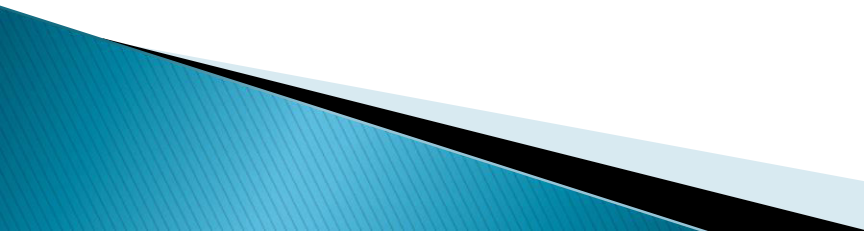
# *Appeals*

- ▶ If an applicant is not supplied information within the prescribed time of thirty days or 48 hours, as the case may be, or is not satisfied with the information furnished to him, he may prefer an appeal to the first appellate authority who is an officer senior in rank to the Public Information Officer. Such an appeal, should be filed within a period of thirty days from the date on which the limit of 30 days of supply of information is expired or from the date on which the information or decision of the Public Information Officer is received. The appellate authority of the public authority shall dispose of the appeal within a period of thirty days or in exceptional cases within 45 days of the receipt of the appeal.
- ▶ If the first appellate authority fails to pass an order on the appeal within the prescribed period or if the appellant is not satisfied with the order of the first appellate authority, he may prefer a second appeal with the Central Information Commission within ninety days from the date on which the decision should have been made by the first appellate authority or was actually received by the appellant.

# *The Appeal should contain the following information*

- ▶ The appeal made to the Central Information Commission should contain the following information:
  - (i) name and address of the appellant;
  - (ii) name and address of the Public Information Officer against the decision of whom the appeal is preferred;
  - (iii) particulars of the order including number, if any, against which the appeal is preferred;
  - (iv) brief facts leading to the appeal;
  - (v) if the appeal is preferred against deemed refusal, particulars of the application, including number and date and name and address of the Public Information Officer to whom the application was made;
  - (vi) prayer or relief sought;
  - (v) grounds for prayer or relief;
  - (vi) verification by the appellant; and
  - (vii) any other information, which the Commission may deem necessary for deciding the appeal.

# *The Appeal should be accompanied by the following documents*

- ▶ The appeal made to the Central Information Commission should be accompanied by the following documents:
    - (i) self-attested copies of the orders or documents against which appeal is made;
    - (ii) copies of the documents relied upon by the appellant and referred to in the appeal; and
    - (iii) an index of the documents referred to in the appeal.
- 

# *Disposal of Appeal*

- ▶ Deciding appeals under the RTI Act is a quasi-judicial function. It is, therefore, necessary that the appellate authority should see to it that the justice is not only done but it should also appear to have been done. In order to do so, the order passed by the appellate authority should be a speaking order giving justification for the decision arrived at.
- ▶ If an appellate authority while deciding an appeal comes to a conclusion that the appellant should be supplied information in addition to what has been supplied by the Public Information Officer, he may either (i) pass an order directing the Public Information Officer to give such information to the appellant; or (ii) he himself may give information to the appellant. In the first case the appellate authority should ensure that the information ordered by him to be supplied is supplied to the appellant immediately. It would, however, be better if the appellate authority chooses the second course of action and he himself furnishes the information alongwith the order passed by him in the matter.
- ▶ If, in any case, the Public Information Officer does not implement the order passed by the appellate authority and the appellate authority feels that intervention of higher authority is required to get his order implemented, he should bring the matter to the notice of the officer in the public authority competent to take action against the Public Information Officer. Such competent officer shall take necessary action so as to ensure implementation of the provisions of the RTI Act.

# *Complaints*

If any person is unable to submit a request to a Public Information Officer either by reason that such an officer has not been appointed by the concerned public authority; or the Assistant Public Information Officer has refused to accept his or her application or appeal for forwarding the same to the Public Information Officer or the appellate authority, as the case may be; or he has been refused access to any information requested by him under the RTI Act; or he has not been given a response to a request for information within the time limit specified in the Act; or he has been required to pay an amount of fee which he considers unreasonable; or he believes that he has been given incomplete, misleading or false information, he can make a complaint to the Information Commission.



# *Disposal of Appeals and Complaints by the CIC*

- ▶ The Central Information Commission decides the appeals and complaints and conveys its decision to the appellant/complainant and first appellate authority/ Public Information Officer. The Commission may decide an appeal/complaint after hearing the parties to the appeal/complaint or by inspection of documents produced by the appellant/complainant and Public Information Officer or such senior officer of the public authority who decided the first appeal. If the Commission chooses to hear the parties before deciding the appeal or the complaint, the Commission will inform the date of hearing to the appellant or the complainant at least seven clear days before the date of hearing. The appellant/complainant has the discretion to be present in person or through his authorized representative at the time of hearing or not to be present.

# *Annual Report of the CIC*

- ▶ The Information Commissions, after the end of each year, are required to prepare reports on the implementation of the provisions of the Act during that year. Each Ministry or Department is required, in relation to the public authorities within its jurisdiction, to collect and provide information to the concerned Information Commission for preparation of the report. The report of the Commission, inter-alia, contains following information in respect of the year to which the report relates:
  - (a) the number of requests made to each public authority;
  - (b) the number of decisions where applicants were not entitled to access to the documents pursuant to the requests, the provisions of the Act under which these decisions were made and the number of times such provisions were invoked;
  - (c) particulars of any disciplinary action taken against any officer in respect of the administration of the Act;
  - (d) the amount of charges collected by each public authority under the Act; and
  - (e) any facts which indicate an effort by the public authorities to administer and implement the spirit and intention of the Act.
- ▶ Every public authority should send necessary material to its administrative Ministry/Department soon after the end of the year so that the Ministry/ Department may send the information to the Commission and the Commission may incorporate the same in its report.
- ▶ If it appears to the Information Commission that a practice of a public authority in relation to the exercise of its functions under the Act does not conform with the provisions or spirit of the Act, it may give a recommendation to the authority specifying the steps ought to be taken for promoting such conformity. The concerned public authority should take necessary action to bring its practice in conformity with the Act.



# *Duties of Public Information Officer (PIO)*

- ▶ The Public Information Officer of a public authority plays a pivotal role in making the right of citizens to information a reality. The Act casts specific duties on him.
- ▶ Soon after receiving the application, the PIO should check whether the applicant has made the payment of application fee or whether the applicant is a person belonging to a Below Poverty Line (BPL) family. If application is not accompanied by the prescribed fee or the BPL Certificate, it cannot be treated as an application under the RTI Act. It may, however, be noted that PIO should consider such application sympathetically and try to supply information sought by way of such an application.
- ▶ The RTI Act provides that the PIO has a duty to render reasonable assistance to the persons seeking information.
- ▶ The PIO may seek the assistance of any other officer as he or she considers necessary for the proper discharge of his or her duties.
- ▶ The answering PIO should check whether the information sought or a part thereof is exempt from disclosure under Section 8 or Section 9 of the Act. Request in respect of the part of the application which is so exempt may be rejected and rest of the information should be provided immediately or after receipt of additional fees, as the case may be.

- ▶ Where a request for information is rejected, the PIO should communicate to the person making the request:
  - (i) the reasons for such rejection;
  - (ii) the period within which an appeal against such rejection may be preferred; and
  - (iii) the particulars of the authority to whom an appeal can be made.
- ▶ If additional fee is required to be paid by the applicant as provided in the Fee and Cost Rules, the PIO should inform the applicant:
  - (i) the details of further fees required to be paid;
  - (ii) the calculations made to arrive at the amount of fees asked for;
  - (iii) the fact that the applicant has a right to make appeal about the amount of fees so demanded;
  - (iv) the particulars of the authority to whom such an appeal can be made; and
  - (v) the time limit within which the appeal can be made.
- ▶ Where a request is received for access to information which is exempt from disclosure but a part of which is not exempt, and such part can be severed in such a way that the severed part does not contain exempt information then, access to that part of the information/record may be provided to the applicant.
- ▶ The Act makes it obligatory for every public authority to make suo-motu disclosure in respect of the particulars of its organization, functions, duties and other matters, as provided in section 4 of the Act.

# *Penalty in case of default*

- Impose a penalty of Rs.250/- each day not exceeding Rs.25,000/- till application is received or information furnished.
- Also recommend for disciplinary actions against Central Public Information Officer

# *Supreme Court of India & RTI*

- ▶ The Supreme Court of India has not notified any rules to operationalise the Right to Information Act, 2005 (RTI Act) within its offices despite the passage of over ten years. According to a combined reading of Section 2(e) (ii) and Section 28 of the RTI Act, the Chief Justice of India is the competent authority empowered to notify rules prescribing, amongst other things, the amount of application fee and additional fee that may be collected from information requesters. The website of the Supreme Court does not display any notification issued by the Chief Justice of India under Section 28 of the RTI Act.

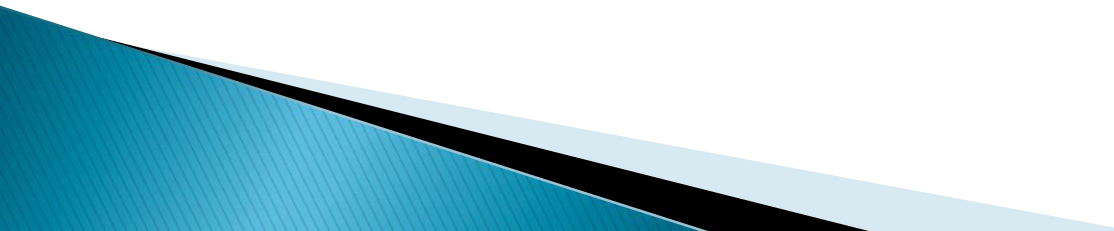
# *RTI reply from SC received by the Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative*

- ▶ In September 2007, CHRI sent a formal application along with application fee to the Supreme Court requesting a copy of the RTI Rules notified by the Chief Justice. They also sought the name and designation of the officers appointed as the Central Public Information Office (CPIO) and Appellate Authority (AA) by the Court. The CPIO's reply is given below :
- ▶ 1. Supreme Court of India has not framed any separate rules under Section 28(2) of the Right to Information Act, 2005.
- ▶ 2. Sh. Ashok Kumar, Additional Registrar/CPIO, Supreme Court of India, New Delhi. (sic)
- ▶ 3. Sh. Sunil Thomas, Registrar, Supreme Court of India is the first Appellate Authority, under the Right to Information Act, 2005.
- ▶ 4. The fee is Rs. 10/- under the Right to Information Act, 2005 in the Supreme Court of India.
- ▶ More recently, in February 2010, CHRI sent another formal application along with application fee to the CPIO of the Supreme Court, seeking a copy of the Rules notified by the Chief Justice of India, under Section 28 of the RTI Act. They also requested the CPIO to indicate the web address of the Rules as we could not find them on the Court's website. The CPIO's reply to their second application is given below:
- ▶ I write to say that this Registry for the present is following the provisions of Right to Information Act, 2005 (22 of 2005) which is available on the website of the Central Information Commission .
- ▶ Shri. M K Gupta, Registrar, Supreme Court of India is the First Appellate Authority under the Right to Information Act, 2005 and the appeal, if so advised, can be filed within 30 days from the receipt of this reply

## *Supreme Court of India following the provisions of the Right to Information Act, 2005*

- ▶ The replies obtained under the RTI Act from the CPIO clearly indicate that the Chief Justice of India has not notified any Rules to operationalise the RTI Act within the Supreme Court.
- ▶ From the website of the Supreme Court of India it is known that the Registry for the present is following the provisions of Right to Information Act, 2005 (22 of 2005) without any notification with regard to this from the Hon'ble Chief Justice of India

# *Officers*

- ▶ **Central Public Information Officer**
  - ▶ Mr. Ajay Agrawal  
Additional Registrar/  
Central Public Information Officer (CPIO)
  
  - ▶ **First Appellate Authority**
  - ▶ Shri M.K. Hanjura  
Registrar /  
First Appellate Authority
- 



# *The Appellant Authority is guided by the RTI Act, 2005*

- ▶ The appellate Authority is guided by the provisions of the RTI Act, 2005.
- ▶ The role, powers, functions, duties and responsibility of the appellant authority of the Supreme Court of India is similar to the appellant authority as under the RTI Act, 2005.



# *RTI & High Courts*

- ▶ Existing arrangement for consultation with or representation by the members of the public, in relation to the formulation of its policy or implementation thereof:-

- 1) A computerized Information Center is functioning in the High Court premises, which provides information on the history of cases, filed/pending in the Madras High Court.

- 2) Other information can be obtained from the Public Information Officer nominated under the RTI Act.

# *Details of information available with or held by the Madras High Court, reduced in electronic form.*

- ▶ 1. History of cases from the date of filing till disposal are digitized and hard copy of information is furnished at the Information Center.
- 2. Judicial records are photo-copied and furnished to the litigants/third parties.
- 3. Certified Copies of judgments/Judicial orders are processed through computers and furnished to the litigants/third parties.
- 4. Important Judgements/Judicial Orders are published on the internet for public use.
- 5. All Judgments/Judicial Orders, from the year 2002, are available in digital form.

# *Facilities available to citizens for obtaining information.*

- ▶ 1. The computerized Information Center, functioning in the High Court premises, furnishes information on the history of cases filed/pending in the Madras High Court.
- 2. Information on other matters can be obtained from the Public Information Officer, nominated under the RTI Act.
- 3. The High Court Library is meant for Hon'ble Judges only. No library is run for public use.

# *Particulars of the Public Information Officers in Madras High Court*

- ▶ The Registrar General, High Court Madras –  
**Appellate Authority**

The Registrar (Administration) – **Public  
Information Officer**

The Joint Registrar (RTI) – **Assistant Public  
Information Officer**

# *Madras High Court Right to Information (Regulation of Fee and Cost) Rules, 2007*

- ▶ Generally it is the Registrar (Administration) who is the appellate authority for RTI queries but by the Madras High Court Right to Information (Regulation of fee and cost) Rules, 2007, the appellate authority under Section 19(1) of the Right to Information Act, at the principal seat of the Madras High Court and Madurai bench of Madras High Court, Madurai and for the State judiciary in the State of Tamil Nadu and Union Territory of Puducherry is the Registrar General of the Madras High Court.

# *General duties of the Registrar (Administration)*

<b>RESPONSIBILITY AND DUTIES</b>	<b>REPORTING AUTHORITY</b>
(i) Appointment, promotion, transfer-posting, seniority, ACRs (except Gazetted Officers) and other matters pertaining to the service conditions of the staff of the High Court and supervision of Establishment-I branch.	The Chief Justice
(ii) Disciplinary matters (including complaints and enquiries) against the staff of the High Court.	The Chief Justice
(iii) Pension, other retiral dues and Medical Reimbursement claims of the retired non-gazetted staff of the High Court.	Sole Responsibility
(iv) Transfer and posting of staff of the High Court to High Court Legal Services Committee/other Institutions on deputation.	The Chief Justice
(v) Rationalization and allocation of staff to different branches of High Court.	The Chief Justice
(vi) Maintenance of the Judgment Writers' Pool and Restorer' Pool.	The Chief Justice
(vii) Appointment and monitoring of the contractually appointed staff.	Concerned Committee/ The Chief Justice
(viii) Monitoring of the Accounts, Cash, Bills, Service Book Section, Audit, GPF, Pension and Salary Branches of the High Court.	Sole responsibility

<b>(ix) Sanctioning of Bills upto Rs.50,000/- and/or as per the delegation of powers by the Chief Justice.</b>	<b>Sole responsibility</b>
(x) Treasurer, Indian Law Institute, Chandigarh Chapter.	Chairman of the Institute
(xi) Appellate Authority for RTI queries.	Sole responsibility

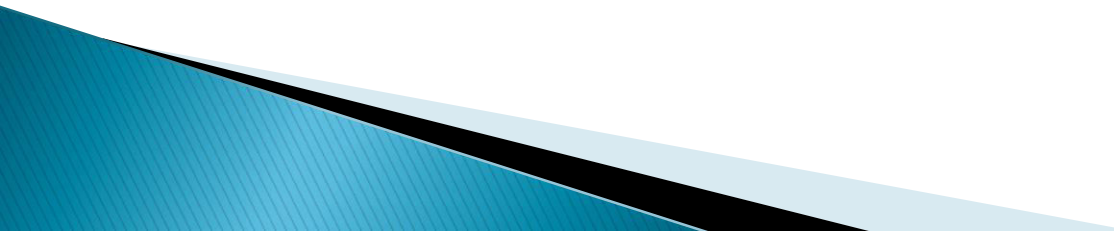
*The following are the subjects over which Information can be made available to Public, Subject to approval of Hon'ble the Chief Justice*

- ▶ 1.Particulars regarding establishment of High Court.
- ▶ 2.Judicial as well as administrative powers of the High Court.
- ▶ 3.Names and addresses and telephone numbers of Honourable the Chief Justice and Honourable Judges of the High Court, both at Principal Seat at Madras and Madurai Bench.
- ▶ 4.The districts coming under the territorial jurisdiction of the Madurai Bench of Madras High Court and the number of Honourable Judges sitting in Madurai Bench.
- ▶ 5.Kinds of cases being dealt with by the High Court:
  - (i) Appellate/Revisional jurisdiction (in both civil & criminal sides);
  - (ii) Extraordinary special original jurisdiction;
  - (iii) original jurisdiction including contempt;
  - (iv) Public Interest Litigation, Green Bench matters.



- ▶ 6.Details regarding constitution of Bench and subjects dealt with by each Bench.
- ▶ 7.Method of filing of cases by using coding sheet for its classification; Forms of appeal/revision/writ petition, plaint and various forms used on the judicial side; Nomenclature of the cases, Court fee payable, period of limitation, etc.
- ▶ 8.Method of processing/checking of cases; assigning of numbers and listing of cases.
- ▶ 9.Details regarding interim orders passed; making application for copy of the orders; service of notice; calling for records from the trial Court and sending back after the disposal of the cases; procedure as to listing of cases, which are ready for final disposal; final orders passed thereon; and furnishing of copies of the same. Hosting of judgments in the internet.
- ▶ 10.Destruction procedure after appealable time.
- ▶ 11.Details of cases filed in the Supreme Court against the orders of the High Court. (Supreme Court section)
- ▶ 12.Rules and Regulations, namely, Civil Rules of Practice, Criminal Rules of Practice, Limitation Act, Court Fee Act, Original Side Rules, Appellate Side Rules, Standing Orders of the High Court and Madras High Court Service Rules.
- ▶ 13.Names, addresses and telephone numbers of the officers of the High Court; The duties and responsibilities of the officers of the High Court assigned by the Honourable Chief Justice; Scales of pay of the officers and employees in the High Court.
- ▶ 14.Details about various judicial and administrative sections in the High Court with the strength and designation of the staff working in each section category wise; the subjects dealt with by each section – both in judicial and administrative sides.

- ▶ 15.The details about the Information Centre of the High Court to assist the litigant public to get the details of the cases filed; the details regarding the pendency or disposal of such cases, and the orders passed thereon.
- ▶ 16.Number of working days/working hours of the High Court and the Registry; List of Holidays for the High Court and for the Subordinate Courts of Tamilnadu including the Union Territory of Pondicherry.
- ▶ 17.Services available under the Legal Services Authorities, High Court Legal Services Committee and the Tamil Nadu Mediation and Conciliation Centre.
- ▶ 18.Procedure regarding reference of cases to Lok Adalats; Details as to the conduct of Lok Adalats in the High Court.
- ▶ 19.Details about the panel of lawyers of the High Court Legal Services Committee and the panel of mediators of the Tamil Nadu State Mediation and Conciliation Centre, High Court, Madras. Details about the panel of Advocate Commissioners and Receivers set by the High Court on its original side.
- ▶ 20.Details as to the constitution as well as functioning of the Tamil Nadu State Judicial Academy. The details about the programmes, refresher courses, seminars and workshops conducted by the Tamil Nadu State Judicial Academy.
- ▶ 21.The Constitution of Administrative Committee and various other committees and the subjects dealt with by those committees.
- ▶ 22.Allotment of districts to the Judges (portfolio Judge) for the administrative as well as judicial purposes.

- ▶ 23. Recruitment to Judicial service (Civil Judges (Junior Division)), the procedure, the method and other relevant details, as and when called for.
  - ▶ 24. Posting and transfer of subordinate Judicial Officers.
  - ▶ 25. Any circular issued by the High Court for the Court Administration which are necessarily to be made known to the public.
  - ▶ 26. Proposals regarding the requirement of infrastructure for the judiciary and forwarded to the Government for sanction.
  - ▶ 27. The budget allocation by the State for the judiciary.
  - ▶ 28. Details about the Museum of the Madras High Court.
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# *HC's reply under RTI Act shocks lawyer*

- ▶ J. Karthikeyan, a lawyer here, is in a state of shock. He had sent a written complaint to the Madras High Court through registered post on January 5 levelling certain allegations against a District Judge and also received an acknowledgement. But thereafter, replying to a query raised by him under the Right to Information Act on the status of his complaint, the High Court on February 10 declined to have received any such complaint petition.
- ▶ The complaint was originally made to five authorities, including the Chief Justice of India; the Chief Justice, Registrar General as well as Registrar (Vigilance) of the Madras High Court and the Principal District and Sessions Judge (PDSJ) in Madurai. Acknowledgements confirming the receipt of the complaints were received from the offices of the Registrar General, Registrar (Vigilance) as well as the PDSJ with their official seals between January 6 and 9.
- ▶ Subsequently, the lawyer sent identical RTI applications to the Public Information Officers (PIO) in the Madras High Court as well as the District Court here on February 3 and sought to know the status of his complaint. Replying to it on February 10, V. Devanathan, Deputy Registrar (RTI Act)-cum-Assistant PIO, said: “I am to state that the complaint petition dated January 5, 2012 said to have been sent by you has not been received in this Registry.”
- ▶ On the other hand, the PDSJ, in his reply, accepted that the complaint dated January 5 was received by him on January 6 itself. However, he expressed his inability to initiate action as the allegations had been levelled against an officer holding the rank of District Judge who could be subjected to enquiry only by the High Court. Further, pointing out that the petitioner had also sent the complaint to the High Court too; the PDSJ said that it was up to the latter to take action.

# *RTI query seeks details on appointment of HC judges*

- ▶ An advocates forum has filed an application under the Right To Information (RTI) Act, seeking to know from the Madras high court authorities whether any steps had been taken to appoint qualified candidates from unrepresented, under-represented and weaker sections of the society' as judges of the court.

The RTI plea, submitted by advocate K Balu, president of the Advocates Forum for Social Justice, listed 13 queries pertaining to the process of appointment of judges to the high court.

With nine of the sanctioned 60 posts lying vacant, the high court top brass is currently sifting through a big list of eligible candidates for appointment as judges.

- ▶ The query sought particulars and names of advocates belonging to under-represented and weaker sections of society who were considered for selection as judges. In other queries, Balu sought to know as to how many advocates had submitted their bio-data for being considered for the appointment.

The RTI application also wanted to know whether the selection involved analysis of comparative merits and ability of the candidates or they were selected on the basis of personal choice of judges in the collegium. It also wanted to know whether any norms and guidelines were adopted by the higher judiciary to ascertain the suitability of the shortlisted candidates.

Does the high court have any mechanism to verify the antecedents of prospective candidates, it asked, adding whether any pre-verification was done by involving police and intelligence agencies. It also wanted to know as to how many sitting judges were close or blood relatives of retired judges of the court.

Before listing the queries, Balu also stated that the appointment process should be transparent and the advocate fraternity and associations of advocates should be given an opportunity to discuss the capacity and quality of the candidates. Pointing out that even for grant of senior advocate status the prospective candidates' names are placed before the full court of all judges for comments and voting, Balu said such a consultation does not take place for the appointment of judges.

A pre-appointment discussion of candidature is necessary in view of the fact that impeachment is the only available mechanism to remove judges once they are appointed and made permanent, he added.



# *In startling precedent, Madras HC rules that RTI Act does not apply to itself*

- ▶ A Madras High Court judgement last fortnight setting aside an order of the Central Information Commission and granting sanctity to the actions of one of its Public Information Officers is an example of the judiciary commitment to the principle of transparency in administration – just as long as it applies only to the other organs of the state.

On January 23 last year, the Central Information Commission heard the appeal of an aggrieved RTI applicant whose requests for information had been turned down by the High Court's Public Information Officer. The applicant's query related to the selection procedure for appointing the Registrar General, and the action taken, if any, on complaints against the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate, Egmore.

The applicant had been persistent. He knocked the doors of the high court 47 times, undeterred by every refusal.

The State Information Commission found no fault with the High Court officials' actions, and instead castigated the applicant for his "offensive and intimidatory acts", which were "calculated to bring embarrassment and ridicule" to the institution of the judiciary.

The High Court's judgement will provide every public authority with a judicially-sanctioned right to question an applicant's motives, and refuse disclosure of information on the ground that the request was made in bad faith.

There are no explicit provisions in the RTI Act on which judges can rely to deny an information request. The court held that since the right to information is a fundamental right, it must also be restricted by those very parameters by which the state is permitted to curtail the right to freedom of expression. A distinction must be drawn between the right to information and the right to seek information, and it is the latter that should prevail. But who will be the final arbiter upon this right? The very same judiciary, which the constitution entrusts with the mantle of being the custodian of Fundamental Rights.

Not only should a citizen exercise the right to seek information in utmost good faith, but it must be "legally sustainable" too, the court ruled, while remaining silent as to under which law(s) shall this sustainability be judged.

The court found that the applicant's requests for information regarding if the repeated complaints against the Egmore magistrate had been acted upon, were vexatious and bore the imprint of malice and lack of faith in the judicial system.

As regards the appointment of the Registrar General, an administrative position that involves quasi-judicial functions, all that the applicant sought to know was if there were any standard rules which were followed in setting up the selection committee. He did not seek to pry into how judges discharge their judicial functions, but only to know how the judiciary fulfils its administrative responsibilities. This is something the public has an inalienable right to be informed about.

This right suffered a big blow with the court's ruling that the Registrar General's post is a "sensitive" one, hence providing a valid ground to decline an information request. Questioning or seeking to know the details of the appointment procedure was tantamount to casting aspersions on the judiciary's impartiality and integrity, the court held.

While court decisions provide clear insight into how judges proceed with the task, the manner in which the judiciary performs its administrative functions remain shrouded in mystery. It would be facile and disingenuous to segregate the administrative functions from the judicial ones, because both are integral to the process of delivering justice.

# *PIO of High Court of A.P Rejected RTI application for certified A.P High court order judgment copy.*

▶ ORDER: .....Applicant.

1. The applicant, Sri Afzal Noor Khan, submitted an application dated 2.04.2011, under the provisions of section 6 Right to Information act, 2005(for brevity 'the Act'), requests to furnish the following:

"certified copy of order for Writ Petition No. 16705 of 1986, by Hon'ble Sri justice Y.V. Anjaneyulu, dated 19-06-1987."

II. In regard to the query of the applicant is concerned, it would be appropriate to refer to the observations made by the Central Commission in Shri Rakesh Kumar Gupta Vs. Income Tax Appellate Tribunal(ITAT), New Delhi in paragraph 49. it is held as under:

- ▶ 49. It is our conclusion, therefore, that given that a judicial authority must function with total independence and freedom, should it be found that an action initiated under the RTI Act impinges upon the authority of that judicial body, the Commission will not authorize the use of the RTI Act for any such disclosure requirement. Section 8(1) (b) of the RTI Act is quite clear, which gives a total discretion to the court or the tribunal to decide as to what should be published. An information seeker should, therefore, approach the concerned court or the tribunal if he intends to have some information concerning a judicial proceeding and it is for the concerned court or the tribunal to take a decision in the matter as to whether the information requested is concerning judicial proceedings either pending before it or decided by it can be given or not.
- ▶ Applying the above ratio, it is informed to the applicant that the State Public Information Office is not the proper authority to secure the required certified copy and tender to the applicant. The applicant is advised to move appropriate application for obtaining certified copy under the relevant Rule of High court Appellate Side Rules, subject to his entitlement.

In view of the above, the request of the applicant is rejected.

The applicant is at liberty to prefer an appeal on the rejected query before the appellate authority-cum-Registrar General, High court of Andhra Pradesh, Hyderabad under section 19 of the Act within 30 days from the date of receipt of the instant order.

- ▶ sd/-
- ▶ State Public Information Officer cum Registrar(judicial)

# *CIC overrules court registrar decision*

- ▶ Exercising its jurisdiction over the administrative side of the judiciary for the first time, the Central Information Commission upheld an appeal against the dismissal of an application asking the Central Public Information Officer (CPIO) of the Supreme Court for details of the action taken by the Supreme Court in a case filed before it.
- ▶ The CPIO in a brief order rejected the applicant, Subhash Chandra Agrawal's application saying that the complaint he was seeking was kept on record in the relevant High Court file. The applicant appealed against the CPIO's decision before the Registrar (Administration), Supreme Court, the first appellate authority under the Right to Information (RTI) Act, saying that the response of the CPIO was "evasive".
- ▶ The Registrar, while dismissing the appeal, held that the CPIO's order had provided adequate information. Mr. Agrawal then went in appeal to the Central Information Commission, arguing that the CPIO's orders had given him no "actionable information."
- ▶ Upholding Mr Agrawal's contention, a two-member bench of the Commission, comprising Chief Central Information Commissioner Wajahat Habibullah and Central Information Commissioner Padma Balasubramaniam, ruled that the CPIO's order by not mentioning when, and under what reference, the application had been transferred to the High Court, made it impossible for the appellant to find ways of seeking further information. The Commission ordered the CPIO of the Supreme Court to inform the applicant of the reference number and date of the orders transferring the application to the High Court to enable the applicant to make a suitable application to the public authority concerned to access the information sought.
- ▶ The Commission observed that the letter informing the applicant of the transfer of the application to the High Court was sent after the 30-day period mandated for the disposal of the application under section 7(1) of the Right to Information (RTI) Act.
- ▶ However, the Commission did not impose a penalty on the CPIO.



# *RTI applicant surprised by HC official's response*

- ▶ An applicant under the Right to Information (RTI) Act, who wanted to know the status of a case originally filed before the principal seat of the Madras High Court in Chennai in 2001 and subsequently transferred to its Madurai Bench in 2004, has taken by surprise by the response asking her to appear in person for verification of her identity, residential address and signature.

M. Shanthi of Karur had filed an RTI application on February 25 seeking details of a civil miscellaneous appeal filed by an insurance company in 2001 against a judgment passed by a lower court earlier. Stating that the case was not listed for hearing for a long time, she sought to know whether it was still pending or had been disposed of.

N. Vijayakumar, Deputy Registrar (Administration) of the Bench and also Assistant Public Information Officer, replied to the application on March 3. Instead of giving a direct answer to the question, he asked the woman applicant to approach her advocate for obtaining the required information.

Not satisfied with the reply, Ms. Shanthi filed an appeal, under the RTI Act, before the Registrar (Administration) of the High Court Bench on March 13, 2010.

Subsequently, she received another letter from R. Susheela Devi, Deputy Registrar (RTI) dated March 31 asking her to come to the Bench during office hours at the earliest for verification of her residential address and signature.

The issue gains significance in view of the fact that there is no provision in the RTI Act which entitles a public information officer to ask an applicant to prove his/her identity. Section 6(2) of the Act categorically states a person seeking information need not give any personal details except those that were required for contacting him.

# *High Court, Madurai Bench adopt different stands on RTI applicant's plea*

- ▶ The Principal Seat of the Madras High Court in Chennai and its Madurai Bench have taken different stands while responding to a couple of applications filed under the Right To Information Act, 2005 seeking similar information with regard to disposal of cases in the two places.

An RTI applicant here had sent an application, dated March 9, 2010, to the Assistant Public Information Officer (APIO) of the Principal Seat seeking certain information related to cases disposed of in Chennai. A similar application was also sent to the Madurai Bench.

The applications were received by both offices on March 24.

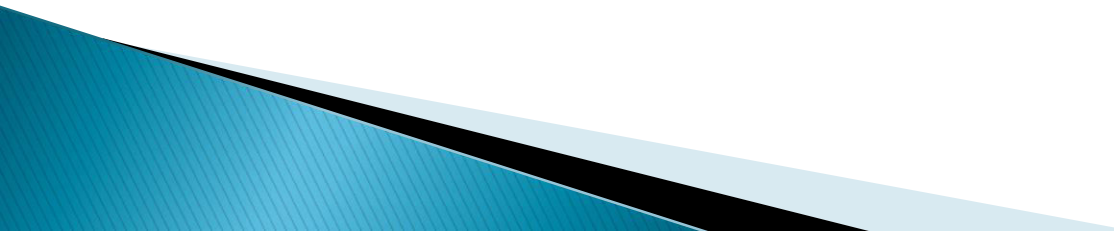
Responding to one of them, R. Susheel Devi, Deputy Registrar (RTI Act)-cum-APIO of the Principal Seat, wrote a letter on April 8 asking the applicant to appear in person for verification of residential address and signature.

The applicant was also asked to produce any appropriate document of identity such as voter's identity card in order to enable the officer to take further action in the matter. Immediately, a reply was sent stating that the Act does not require an applicant to disclose his identity.

It was also stated that it was enough for an RTI applicant to provide his communication address to which the information should be sent. However, the reply did not evoke any response from the officer even after the expiry of 30 days, the statutory period within which the information should be provided. On the other hand, responding to the application sent to the Madurai Bench, its Registrar (Administration) S.

Udayan wrote a letter dated April 23 stating that the issue was brought to the notice of the Chief Justice who had ordered to provide the information as requested. The Registrar also asked the applicant to pay Rs.2,450 apart from the court fee stamp for Rs.50 stuck on the application, towards copying charges for providing around 650 pages of information. The money was paid through a demand draft on April 29 and the information was provided on May 24.

# *Conclusion*

- ▶ The implementation of the law on right to know for setting up information regime therefore augurs well for strengthening the knowledge society as well as for increasing the accountability of public bodies. The trend in improvement in delivery of services, due to the perceived good governance, provides sufficient indication for alleviation of poverty and liquidation of illiteracy in a much shorter duration than envisaged for the realization of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).
- 

# *Suggestion*

- ▶ First, all the development projects, particularly poverty alleviation programmes should incorporate transparency and accountability norms to allow for objective scrutiny of the process of execution of programmes and to assess the extent of adherence of the norms of equity and justice in delivery of essential services to the persons who are entitled for the specified benefits.
- ▶ Second, a comprehensive Information Management System should be developed by each public authority for storage and retrieval of data and information that may be shared with anyone who seeks to inspect the records and use the information for development purposes. Use of information technologies would not only facilitate faster dissemination of information but would also reduce the costs of servicing and sharing information.
- ▶ Third, in view of high illiteracy among the poor, a multimedia approach should be adopted to educate and train people of diverse linguistic backgrounds. Besides, they should also know as to how to make best use of information for effective participation in economic and political processes.

- ▶ Fourth, the role of NGOs is critical for creating effective demand for maximum disclosure of information relating to public activities so that an informed citizenry can participate in designing and implementation of socio-economic programmes. Increase in awareness about the human rights and how to realize them would lead to a strong multiplier effects to eradicate poverty and to create necessary conditions for good governance, of which all the stakeholders would be duly proud of.
- ▶ Finally, democratization of information and knowledge resources is critical for people's empowerment to realize the entitlements as well as to augment opportunities for enhancing the options for improving quality of life. The strengthening of information regime is therefore sine quo non for promoting democratic governance and right to development.

▶ *THANK YOU*