

EDITORIAL NOTE

Inclusion of Right to Information (RTI) in Sustainable Development Goals 2030 as a major target has increased its importance manifold. Regarded as one of the most powerful laws, the RTI law needs most effective tools to be well understood by its stakeholders in terms of implementation and awareness. Punjab Information Commission (PIC) has launched this

newsletter with the same spirit and cause as it will be disseminated through email, direct mail and on spot distribution among maximum audience. The layout, design and content of the newsletter has been developed by the GIZ Interns hired from different educational institutions who are supporting understaffed PIC. While selecting and editing its content, we have main-

ly focused on the audience needs. It covers major activities of Punjab Information Commission in form of news, photographs, articles, announcements besides what is being done in RTI across the world. I thank my team for its utmost efforts to turn my dream into a reality. I hope PIC's first periodic publication will become a powerful voice spreading message of

RTI from Pakistan to the each corner of the globe. At last but not the least, we need and welcome your valuable feedback to improve it. I assure that each word of the audience, either based on criticism or admiration, will guide us to success and achieving the desired goals.

**Haji Ahmad
Naem**
(Executive Director)



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Instructions for Applicants

- The application must be addressed to the relevant Public Information Officer (PIO) with his complete address. However, Head of the public body also can be added.
 - To avoid delay & complications the volume of required information should be kept to the point & possibly minimum as public body will provide 20 copies free of cost while Rs. 2/- will be charged for each additional copy.
 - Keep the proof of receipt either application sent by hand or through courier/post. At this stage no copy of application is required to send to the Punjab Information Commission.
 - Wait for 14 or maximum 28 days. In case of denial or no response, you can file an appeal to the Head of same Public body or send a compliant to Chief Information Commissioner Punjab by attaching the copy of first application & receipt.
 - The Commission will seek explanation from the concerned PIO and will update to the applicant.
 - The Punjab Transparency & RTI Act 2013 can address complaints only against the public bodies of Punjab Province. It cannot seek information from federal departments.
 - The commission should be informed if the information is received to save the time & money of public bodies.
 - Due to shortage of staff the commission is not in the position to receive through E-mails. Please, send the applications by hand & by post.
- Respectable citizens are requested to read the Act carefully before lodging an application or complaint. The Urdu version of the Act is also available on www.rti.punjab.pk.

درخواست گزاروں کے لئے ضروری ہدایات

- ☆ پنجاب شفافیت و حق معلومات کے قانون 2013ء کی دفعہ 10 کے مطابق درخواست لازمی طور پر متعلقہ محکمے کے ”پبلک انفارمیشن آفیسر (پی آئی او)“ کے نام لکھیں تاہم اضافی طور پر سربراہ ادارہ کا عہدہ بھی درج کر سکتے ہیں۔ درخواست پر پی آئی او کا مکمل پتہ لکھیں اور درخواست کی نقل سنبھال کر رکھیں۔
- ☆ اگر پی آئی او کو دستی درخواست دی ہے تو اس سے وصولی کی رسید لیں اور اگر بذریعہ ڈاک یا کوریئر بھجوائیں تو اس کی رسید بھی سنبھال کر رکھیں۔
- ☆ درخواست بھجوانے یا وصول کرانے کی تاریخ سے 14 یا زیادہ سے زیادہ 28 دن تک انتظار کریں۔ جواب نہ ملے یا انکار ہو جائے تو پھر پہلی درخواست اور وصولی رسید کی کاپی لف کر کے چیف انفارمیشن کمیشن پنجاب کے نام شکایت بھجوائیں۔ مقررہ مدت سے پہلے کمیشن کو درخواست کی پیشگی کاپی بھجوانا پیسے اور وقت کا ضیاع ہے۔
- ☆ اس قانون کے تحت وفاقی یا دیگر صوبوں کے اداروں سے معلومات نہیں لی جاسکتیں۔ لہذا درخواست سے پہلے اس امر کی تسلی کرنا ضروری ہے۔
- ☆ اگر کمیشن کی کارروائی پر آپ کو معلومات مل جائیں تو کمیشن کو ضرور اطلاع دیں تاکہ ایسی درخواستوں پر محکموں اور کمیشن کا مزید وقت ضائع نہ ہو۔
- ☆ معلومات کی 20 کاپیاں مفت ہیں۔ اس سے زائد 2 روپے فی کاپی فیس لاگو ہے۔ لہذا بلا ضرورت معلومات کی تعداد نہ بڑھائیں، اپنا اور محکموں کا وقت بھی بچائیں۔
- ☆ سٹاف کی شدید کمی اور موثر عملدرآمد میں مشکلات کے باعث کمیشن فی الوقت ای میل کے ذریعے درخواستیں وصول کرنے سے قاصر ہے۔ لہذا صرف دستی یا ڈاک کے ذریعے درخواستیں بھجوائی جائیں۔
- ☆ قانون کی دفعہ (3) کے مطابق درخواست میں معلومات کے حصول کی وجہ تحریر کرنا لازمی نہیں ہے تاہم بعض افراد اندستہ درخواستوں میں منفی تاثر کی حامل وجوہات درج کر دیتے ہیں۔ اس سے ایک بہترین قانون کی روح کو نقصان پہنچ سکتا ہے لہذا حوصلہ شکنی ضروری ہے۔
- ☆ معزز شہریوں سے گزارش ہے کہ پنجاب حکومت نے یہ قانون حکومتی امور میں شفافیت کے فروغ اور شہریوں کے حق معلومات کے تحفظ کے لئے بنایا ہے۔ براہ کرم اس کے مثبت اور درست استعمال کے لئے قانون کا بغور مطالعہ کریں اور معاشرے میں بہتری لانے میں حکومت کی مدد کریں۔ قانون کارڈو ترجمہ بھی کمیشن کی ویب سائٹ www.rti.punjab.gov.pk پر دستیاب ہے۔

Global RTI activist Toby Mendel visits PIC

LAHORE: Mr. Toby Mendel visited PIC to discuss the current status of Punjab Transparency and Right To Information Act 2013 on 27th Feb 2018, with Mr. Ahmad Naeem Malik, Executive Director, and the interns. Mr. Mendel provided an insight to how RTI Law was being implementing across the globe and compared it with Pakistan.

In the meeting, Mr Mendel shared that he was developing a tool for assessing implementation of RTI law in Pakistan. The meeting was an interactive

session between the interns and Mr. Mendel, in which interns participated and learned benefits about RTI utilization. The interns shared their awareness tools with him for feedback.



C.E.O of Awaz Foundation visits PIC

Lahore: C.E.O of Awaz Foundation Islamabad, Mr. Zia ur Rehman visited Punjab Information Commission to discussion about current status of The Right to Information act with the Executive Director PIC, Mr. Ahmed Naeem. In the meeting Mr. Naeem Malik briefed him on the Punjab Transparency and Right to Information Act 2013 and the measures Punjab Government is taking to make the information accessible and ensure the transparency.

In an exchange of dialogues, Mr. Zia acknowledged the work of Punjab Information Commission and said that it will be a landmark for good governance and in helping common people.

Further, Mr. Ahmad Naeem Malik add-

ed that one of the most important steps was the implementation of the Punjab Transparency and Right to Information law that has enabled citizens to access information from any Public bodies and restored their confidence in Government.



PIC participates in Partner Planning Workshop 2018

ISLAMABAD: Punjab Information Commission participated in "Partner Planning Workshop 2018" at a local hotel.

The purpose of the workshop was to analyse the previous performance of LoGo Program and discuss the work plan for next year. Moreover, the upcoming policies and ac-



tivities along with timelines and shared responsibilities regarding the implementation of RTI law in Punjab during 2018 were discussed in detail. Representatives from the GIZ, PIC, Excise, Taxation & Narcotics Department Punjab, District Health Authority Kasur, and Civil Societies participated in the workshop.

PIC office shifted

Office of Punjab Information Commission has been shifted from 14-T Gulberg-II to 68-1-C, Model Town, Lahore.

New telephone No.

+92 42-99231507-8

Fax No.

+92 42-35915778

PIC launches new website

rti.punjab.gov.pk

Punjab Information Commission has launched a new website that is more colorful, vibrant and user friendly. The new website has been developed by the PITB Team. Content has been upgraded to make it more informative for the users with Urdu translation of the Act. In future, the website will have online Complaint Management Information System (CMIS), told by the Executive Director of PIC Naeem Malik. He requested the citizens to visit the new website and give their feedback for further improvements.

GIZ Advisor’s farewell visit to PIC

Lahore: Advisor for State Citizens Dialogue of GIZ, Ms. Janine Badauch, paid a farewell visit to PIC, where she was received by Executive Director of PIC Mr. Ahmad Naeem Malik. She was pleased to meet the interns from different universities engaged under LoGo Programme.



Ms. Janine exchanged views with the interns on RTI intervention in Punjab and relevant issues regarding the implementation. She quoted, “the German Government believes in proactive collaborations with Pakistan to empower its citizens by improving their lives. The RTI Law is one of the powerful tools that effectively protects all

rights of the public.”

She lauded the interest of the interns in RTI Law and their efforts to promote it through learning and practice process. Mr. Naeem and Interns Coordinator, Mr. Umar Imtiaz Rana gave account of Ms. Janine’s contribution and efforts towards supporting the PIC.

Nomination of PIO, A Legal responsibility of each public body

Under Section 7 of the Punjab Transparency & Right to Information Act 2013 its obligated to nominate a Public Information Officer in Government departments, attached departments and NGOs receiving funding from Punjab Government. It is a responsibility of the Head of Department of each public body to issue a notification for nomination of 16 or above grade officer as Public Information Officer in each sub-ordinate offices as earliest. A copy of the notification should be sent to the Punjab Information Commission at following address 68-1-C Model Town, Lahore

DC’s of Bahawalpur and RY Khan designated PIOs

ADDL Deputy Commissioner (G) Bahawalpur nominated sixty-six Public Information Officers and Deputy Commissioner (G) Rahim Yar Khan nominated forty-nine Public Information Officers (PIOs). The nominated Public Information Officers (PIO’s) are from various government departments such as Health, Agriculture, and Livestock etc. The request was made by PIC on 30-01-2018.



RTI
around the
World

Mexico on the Top List of Global RTI rating

According to the Global Right to Information rating, the most notable change in the latest rankings is the displacement of Serbia as the top country on the rating for the first time since it was launched in 2011. Mexico has now replaced Serbia in the top spot by earning 136 points. Status of other countries Among the new countries that enacted the legislation, the strongest law was found to be that of Sri Lanka, which scored 121 points, putting it at 9th place globally. Every country in South Asia now has a RTI like legislation except Bhutan. The South

Asian region is also a strong performer according to the new ratings with every country scoring over 100 points except Pakistan. Pakistan’s federal law scored only 66 points and is placed in the 89th position.

Five countries enacted a RTI like legislation in 2016 that includes Kenya, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Togo and Vietnam. Countries like Iran, Austria, Jordan, and Germany are in the bottom 10 of these rankings.

Source: (www.rti-rating.org)

PILDAT & PIC conduct training for PIOs

Bahawalpur, Lodhran: Pakistan Institute of Legislative Development and Transparency (PILDAT) and PIC arranged separate training sessions for Public Information Officers of different departments of Bahawalpur and Lodhran. The participants were addressed by the Executive Director of PILDAT, Mr. Ahmed Bilal Mehboob, former Chief Information Commissioner KP, Professor. Kaleem ullah former Information Commissioner of PIC Malik Ahmed Raza Tahir, Executive Director of PIC Mr. Naeem Malik and Project Director Ms Anisa Dar. The participants expressed that the training was very useful for the PIOs.



Participants of Bahawalpur workshop



Lodhran: Ex.Information Commissioner Punjab Ahmad Raza Tahir addressing participants of workshops.

Inaccessibility to Information

By Bahawal Sipra

We have often heard the phrase that information is power but in true sense, information is the first step that is used to exercise political and economic power. When the public is unable to access information, an environment of mistrust, disempowerment and frustration is created because the public don't have the information of the policies and activities of the government, which further unable them to participate in the democratic process.

A great importance is given to information as according to the International Human Rights NGO Article 19, information is described as "the oxygen of democracy".

In order to provide public with their desired information, a legal framework is formed, which is known as the Right to Information Act. Several countries have adopted it across the globe including Pakistan. According to the Global Right to Information analysis report 2016, 111 countries have national level right to information laws.

In Pakistan, the law is being implemented in two different provinces, which are KP and Punjab. Whereas the Punjab Transparency and Right to Information Act 2013 is being implemented in the area of Punjab. With the help of RTI, the public can access to the information

related to the functioning, spending and actions of the government and the public can use RTI Law to file a complain if they are denied to access the information. RTI can help in fighting against corruption, as the public will be well aware of the government spending

This is an excellent grass root idea in participatory democracy. Therefore right to information law is a catalytic tool and can bring a silent revolution. The existing law has sufficient provisions available to address genuine concerns of the people. Encouragement is needed to inform on illicit practices to help counter and prevent corruption.

SUCCESS STORY

A Citizen applauds PIC on getting information

An applicant named Dr. Naseer Ahmad Shahzad S/O Abdul Hameed R/O Chak No. 129 SB District Sargodha wrote a letter of thanks to the Chief Information Commissioner Punjab on obtaining information from District Police Office Sargodha in a short time. The applicant disclosed that he had been

struggling for getting requested information for last seven years and had to visit the DPO Office repeatedly. Applauding the role of Punjab Transparency & Right to Information Act 2013, Mr. Naseer declared it a citizen's friendly law.

