

Press Note for 14th October, 2011

The first day of 6th Annual Convention of the Central Information Commission commenced with inauguration of the event by Hon'ble Prime Minister of India, Dr. Manmohan Singh. Shri Satyananda Mishra, Chief Information Commissioner, CIC, Shri M. L. Sharma, IC, CIC, Shri Narayanasamy, Minister of State for Personnel Public Grievances & Pensions, Government of India and Smt. Alka Sirohi, Secretary, DoP&T were present on the dais.

Shri Satyananda Mishra, Chief Information Commissioner welcomed the guests on the occasion of completion of sixth year of the implementation of RTI Act. He stated that in a short period of six years, this law has found its way into the daily conversation of people. It is not uncommon to hear people say 'I will RTI if so-and-so is not done.' It has become a verb. He opined that the Right to Information (RTI) Act is the second most important legal document we have given to ourselves after the Constitution of India.

In his opening address Hon'ble Minister of Personnel stated that the knowledge is power and the transparency is solution. The Government is making all efforts for making the people aware. He also stated that the Government has recently created an identity for the RTI Act in the form of an Anthem. The Hon'ble Minister exhorted

that the Indian law on the Right to Information is a model and unique legislation for the developing world. Government of the day has been working steadily towards creating the culture of openness in place of the culture of secrecy.

Dr. Manmohan Singh, the Prime Minister while inaugurating the convention stated that the conference of the Commissioners is very important. He said that he had the opportunity to address the third annual convention of Information Commissioners in November 2008. He observed that three more years have passed since he made observations in regard to the benefits of RTI Act and he can say with confidence that the Right to Information Act is now being more extensively and effectively used to bring into public gaze many areas of the work of public authorities which would otherwise have remained hidden from public gaze. He concluded by stating that I expect the 6th Convention of the Information Commissioners to give us a holistic assessment of the ground situation in regard to the implementation of the RTI Act.

The vote of thanks was proposed by Shri M L Sharma, the Information Commissioner, CIC. In his remarks he observed that it is the paramount task of the Central Information Commission and the State Information Commissions to strike a balance between the need to disclose information and at the same time to disallow information

which may adversely affect the national security or the efficiency of the administrative machinery. He thanked the RTI practitioners and stated that the Commission is sure that their field experience will enrich the proceedings of the technical sessions.

The Sixth Annual Convention is discussing four topics, namely – Transparency and accountability: with special reference to Public Private Partnership Projects, RTI Act : Potential & efficacy in curbing corruption and grievance redressal, RTI Act - Exemption Provisions & Second Schedule and Experiences and Prospects of Information Commissions.