

CITIZEN CHARTER

1. INTRODUCTION

The intention of the Right to Information Act 2005 is to 'provide for setting out the practical regime of Right to Information for citizens to secure access to information under the control of Public Authorities in order to promote transparency and accountability.' Central Information Commission has been constituted on 12 October 2005 under the RTI Act 2005. Jurisdiction of the Central Information Commission extends to all Central Public Authorities. Similarly, every state has a state level Information Commission where jurisdiction extends to all state Public Authorities.

An information seeker can seek information under section-6(3), subject to certain exemptions as per section-8 under RTI Act. Central Public Information Officer (CPIO) is duty bound to furnish the information within 30 days. If the applicant fails to get information or correct/full information then he can file an appeal before the First Appellate Authority (FAA) within 30 days. FAA can order to provide information. If the information seeker is not satisfied with the order of the FAA or does not receive information, then he can approach the Central Information Commission in second appeal under section-19 or as a complaint under section-20 of RTI Act 2005. In addition, under section-25 of Act, the Commission prepares an annual report on the implementation of the provisions of RTI Act, based on information received from all enlisted public authorities.

2. Mandate of the Commission

- To receive and inquire into complaints from any citizen as provided in Section 18 of the RTI Act, 2005
- To receive and decide upon the second appeals from any citizen as provided in Section 19 of the RTI Act, 2005 and RTI Rules, 2012.
- To exercise the powers conferred on CIC under the RTI Act, 2005
- To perform the duty of "Monitoring and Reporting" as provided in Section 25 of the RTI Act, 2005.

3. Digital Initiatives by the Commission

(a) Digitization of records

- The Commission has digitized all its records of old and current cases.

- The fresh cases registered in the Commission are also kept in a digitized format. The digitized records assist in more efficient scheduling and hearing of cases and their faster disposal.

(b) Receipt of cases and Registration

- Through its AppCoMS software, the Commission processes the cases received through offline and online mode.
- Once Second Appeal/Complaint is submitted to the Commission, it is allocated a diary number. Through the software, this diary number is communicated to the sender through SMS/E-Mail.
- The Dak/Online receipt pertaining to cases is scrutinised and a case is registered, provided documents as required by RTI Rules are found to be complete.
- A facilitation memo as well as SMS and e-mail is issued to the sender in cases having deficiencies in documentation etc. as per the extant RTI Rules and the sender is requested to make good the deficiencies.
- Once a case is registered, all documents of the case are converted into e-book which is cross referenced and book-marked. This e-book is made available to the Information Commissioners for hearing of the case.

4. e-Court and Video Conferencing

After a case in e-book form reaches to the registry of the concerned Information Commissioners, the case is scheduled for hearing through the software. When the hearing is scheduled, the system generates SMS/e-mail alert to the appellant/complainant, besides generating physical notice of hearing. Subsequently, the system generates SMS as well as e-mail alerts for the appellant/complainant at the stage of uploading of decision on the CIC website. Decisions are also sent in physical form to the appellant/complainant and CPIO (Central Public Information Officer).

The Commission offers the facility of hearing through Video Conferencing at almost all district headquarters of National Informatics Centre in the country. This enables appellant/complainant and Public Authorities from across the country to attend case hearings at the NIC studio in a nearby district headquarters, instead of coming to Delhi.

5. Public Authority interface

The Central Information Commission's new software provides for a 'Public Authority Module'. This interface makes the appeals/complaints registered in the Commission visible to the public authority immediately after registration. This enables them to take corrective action without waiting for their hearing to be fixed by the Commission. This facilitates the Public Authority in providing immediate relief to the applicants. The module also makes provision for the public authority to upload the responses/submissions in the case online. The Commission also proposes to monitor recovery of penalties/compensation ordered by the Commission through this module.

6. Citizens Services:

- **Facilitation Desk:** - A facilitation desk has been functioning in the Commission since 1st July 2016. This desk facilitates appellant/complainant in filing appeals/complaints before the Commission as well as handles their queries relating to cases registered before the Commission.
- **One Click Information Window:** - The Commission has introduced a 'Citizen Services' icon on its website for the convenience of citizens. This user-friendly feature provides following assistance to the citizens
 - a) Status of their case on single click.
 - b) Submit Online Appeal and Complaint
 - c) Dak/Appeal/Complaint Status
 - d) Cause list
 - e) Decisions
 - f) FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions)