

15th Annual Convention of Central Information Commission

The fifteenth Annual Convention of the Central Information Commission was organized on 9th November, 2022 at Vigyan Bhavan. The theme of the 15th Annual Convention of the Central Information Commission was “**Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav: Citizen-centric Governance Through RTI.**” The 15th Annual Convention of the Central Information Commission was inaugurated by Shri Om Birla, Hon’ble Speaker, Lok Sabha. Dr. Jitendra Singh, Union Minister of State PMO and Ministry of Public Grievances and Pensions, participated in the convention as Guest of Honour. Shri YK Sinha, Chief Information Commissioner, Central Information Commission delivered the welcome speech in which he outlined the innovative steps taken by the Central Information Commission to strengthen the regime of RTI in the country. The vote of thanks for the inaugural session was delivered by Shri. Neeraj Kumar Gupta, Central Information Commissioner.

Chief Information Commissioners/ Information Commissioners of State Information Commissions, officials of the Central Government, including Public Information Officers and First Appellate Authorities from Public Authorities, representatives of Media and Civil Society Organizations, students, and other stakeholders participated in the Convention.

2. While delivering the inaugural address, the Hon’ble Speaker, Lok Sabha said that the Prime Minister has pledged from the ramparts of the Red Fort to combat corruption at all levels in the country, RTI is an important tool in the hands of the citizens. The Hon’ble Speaker said that a more transparent and open system of governance leads to inclusive and greater participation of the citizens. Government is run by public funds and hence accountability and transparency are essential in order to build confidence and trust in the Government. In a democracy, RTI serves to act as a bridge between the Government and the citizens in this regard. The RTI serves as a tool to usher positive changes not only in the manner of functioning of Government but also in formulating citizen-friendly policies. Dr. Jitendra Singh, Hon’ble MoS (PMO &PP) appreciated the efforts of the Central Information Commission for continuing its hearing the appeals during the Covid pandemic. The

MoS(PMO&PP) also talked about the usefulness of the RTI in bringing about transparency in the working of the government. He also stated that RTI Act is helping in achieving the aim of the government to have minimum government with maximum governance.

After the inauguration, three technical sessions were held on the following topics:

- (i) RTI as an instrument of good governance- Shri Heeralal Samariya, Central Information Commissioner- Moderator. Shri ML Sharma former Central Information Commissioner and Ms. Rashmi Chowdhary, Additional Secretary, DoPT as panelists.
- (ii) Right to Information Vs. Right to Privacy- Ms. Saroj Punhani, Central Information Commissioner - Moderator. Dr. Niten Chandra, Secretary, M/o Law & Justice, Ms. Anjali Bharadwaj, Satark Nagarik Sangthan (NGO) and Col Anil Chandra (Retd.), Advocate as panelists.
- (iii) RTI- Its impact on grievance redressal- Dr. Amita Pandove, Central Information Commissioner - Moderator. Shri V. Srinivas, Secretary, DARPG and Shri Arun Sobti, DG, SCOPE as panelists.

Following the presentations by the speakers, the speakers answered questions from the audience. These interactive sessions contributed to a better understanding of the provisions of the RTI Act.

A vote of thanks was delivered by Dr. Amita Pandove, Central Information Commissioner.