

IMPACT OF RTI ON REDUCTION OF CORRUPTION AND IMPROVEMENT IN ACCOUNTABILITY OF A PUBLIC INSTITUTION

BY

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ABSTRACT

The present study is based on the action taken by the author for release and payment of salary arrear from a Public Institution under Right to Information Act 2005. The salary arrear of the author for the period from 01.04.2002 to 18.12.2002 was not released and paid by the employer in spite of several verbal and written reminders made during the last 3 ½ years period. An application was submitted to Public Information Officer concerned on 26.05.2006 to get information under Right to Information Act 2005 but very little information was provided. When an appeal was submitted to Appellate Authority on 03.07.2006 some more responses were received and the salary arrear was and payment was made to the appellant on 11.08.2006. It could become possible only because the information was demanded under RTI Act 2005. However the complete information such as certified copies of letters, file noting and the date, time and place for inspection of file related to the salary arrear was not provided. The second appeal has been submitted with Central Information Commission on 28.08.2006 for getting Complete information and Compensation on account of harassment and mental agony received by the appellant and her parents, loss of interest due to delay in release and payment of salary arrear and expenditure incurred on conveyance in meeting different officers for release of salary and typing, photocopying and postage for sending letters as well as a departmental inquiry against those who are responsible for detaining the salary arrear 3 ½ years. The author is fully confident that RTI Act 2005 will definitely reduce corruption and it will bring drastic improvement in accountability of public institutions.

INTRODUCTION

Corruption is an important factor in the slow progress of any country. The poor accountability of public institutions is another factor which is equally responsible for the wastage of public money and the efforts made by the Government. It can be very confidently

said that most of the citizens of our country are against the corruption and each one of us wish that if we are really interested to serve the people then corruption must be eradicated and the public institutions should be made more accountable. As per World Bank survey India ranks 47th in the list of corrupt countries in the world.

The Right to Information Act 2005 has come right time in the History of Independent India. It is a very forceful tool which can reduce the corruption to a great extent. It can also bring drastic improvement in the accountability of public institutions.

Methodology

First of all name and address of Public Information Officer was collected. An application having 15 questions was prepared. A pay order of Rs. 20 (Rs. 10/- for information fee + Rs. 10/- for charges of photocopies) was taken from Bank. The application was submitted in the office of Public Information Officer on 26.05.06. Within 15 days a letter was received with very little information. This fact was communicated to the Public Information Officer and the remaining information was again requested. But no information was provided.

· On 03.07.2006 First Appeal was submitted with Appellate Authority (ICAR) RTI Act, 2005 which was redirected to the Director of the concerned institute stating that Director is the Appellate Authority for matters relating to Institutes.

On 07.07.2006 second letter was received which gave partial reply to the questions 1, 3, 4, 5, 6 & 13 only. On 07.08.2006 3rd letter was received enclosing reply from Head and on-behalf of Co-PIs. Since complete information was not provided therefore, an appeal has been submitted with Chief Information Commissioner, for getting complete information and compensation for harassment and mental agony received by me and my parents, loss of interest and expenditure incurred on conveyance for meeting different authorities, typing, photocopy and postal charges for sending letters as well as a departmental inquiry against those who are responsible for detaining the salary arrear for 3 ½ years.

Results & Discussion

The analysis of data received is given in table 1.

Table 1. Results of Analysis of replies received from PIO

SI No.	Parameter	Number/percentage
1	Total Number of questions	19 No.
2.	Total number of replies	19 No.
3.	Percentage of satisfactory replies	42.1%
4.	Percentage of unsatisfactory replies	57.9%
4(a)	Copies (including file noting) were not provided	54.5%
4(b)	No information was provided about action taken	18.2%
4(c)	Date, time and place was not intimated for inspection of file	18.2%
4(d)	The reply given was not relevant to the question	9.1%

As shown in Table1 in total 19 questions were asked and 19 replies were received . The analysis of data showed that 8 out of 19 (42.1%) of the replies were found satisfactory while 11 out of 19 (57.9%) of replies were unsatisfactory.

In case of unsatisfactory replies in 54.5% cases copies (including file noting) were not provided. In 18.2% replies it was only stated that timely action was taken but no information was provided about the action taken. In 18.2% replies it was stated that correspondence in this regard may be seen in the office but no date, time and place was intimated. In 9.1% replies the response given was not relevant to the question For example the question was asked about the salary arrear proposal but the reply was given about salary arrear bill which is quite different.

The observations on the impact of RTI Act before and after the reply of questions asked in the application are given in Table 2:

Table 2. Impact of RTI Application in Concerned division of a public institution

Sl.No.	Before RTI Act	After RTI Act
1.	The staff was lethargic	The staff has become active
2.	The staff did not have any fear	The staff has fear of RTI Act
3.	The staff was not regular and punctual in their duties	The staff has become regular and punctual
4.	The payment was being delayed	The prompt action is being taken for making the payment.
5.	The staff was not feeling responsibility	The staff has started feeling responsibility
6.	Proper action was not being taken by the staff on the complaints	All concerned Officers and Officials have become serious about each and every complaint
7.	Proper files were not maintained	All concerned Officers and Officials have been asked to maintain proper files
8.	The staff members were not conscious about their duties.	The staff members have become conscious about their duties
9.	The staff members were engaged in corrupt practices	The corruption in the division is reducing
10.	The authorities were not alert	The authorities have become alert to avoid such cases in future

Conclusions

The following conclusions can be drawn from the above mentioned study.

1. There is a considerable reduction in the corruption among the staff of the public institution.
2. There is a considerable improvement in the accountability of the public institution.

On the basis of the above mentioned conclusions it can be very confidently stated that RTI Act can reduce corruption and it can bring drastic improvement in the accountability of the public Institutions.

Suggestions

There must be a provision to provide protection to the applicants asking information on corruption under Right to Information Act 2005.