

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS
(DEPARTMENT OF PERSONNEL AND TRAINING)

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 2753
(TO BE ANSWERED ON 10.03.2021)

STRENGTHENING RTI SYSTEM

2753. SHRIMATI SAJDA AHMED:

Will the **PRIME MINISTER** be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government has issued any directives to all departments for not disclosing personal details of RTI applicants;
- (b) the steps taken by the Government to strengthen RTI system during the last two years;
- (c) whether Government proposes to set up grievance redressal cell to serve the applicants regarding application, status and procedure; and
- (d) the details of the initiatives taken by the Government for awareness and promotion of RTI particularly in rural areas?

ANSWER

**MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES
AND PENSIONS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE
(DR. JITENDRA SINGH)**

(a): Yes. Government has from time to time issued Office Memorandums vide No. 1/31/2013-IR dated 08.01.2014, No.1/1/2013-IR dated 21.10.2014 & 07.10.2016 and No.1/1/2013-IR (Pt) dated 20.06.2017 bringing to notice of all Ministries/ Departments of Government of India that personal information of an RTI applicant should not be disclosed.

(b): The Government has launched the RTI web portal www.rtionline.gov.in to facilitate citizens for filing of online RTI applications and first appeals w.e.f. 21st August, 2013. As on 01.03.2021, 2381 Central Public Authorities are aligned with the system. Since February, 2016, the citizens can file online RTI application and first appeal in Hindi also.

The Government has also issued an OM No.1/6/2011-IR dated 10.07.2020 in the wake of Covid-19 pandemic advising that all the Public Authorities dealing with essential services should widely disseminate information regarding the government relief, rescue and other welfare actions, in the media as well as on their official websites in accordance with Section 4 of the RTI Act, 2005.

(c): The RTI Act has an inbuilt mechanism to settle complaints/ grievances relating to implementation of the provisions of the Act. It empowers the citizens to lodge complaints directly with the Information Commission. The Commission has certain powers of a civil court in the matter of inquiring into complaints. It also has powers to impose heavy penalties in case of default.

(d): The Government implements the Centrally Sponsored Annual Programme “Improving Transparency and Accountability in Government through effective implementation of RTI Act” which includes annual expenditure on various activities like:-

- (i) **Awareness Generation** including the development of a long term communication strategy for RTI, assistance to States for RTI week celebration; Innovative Awareness Generation programmes.
- (ii) A **Call Centre** plus portal for filing RTI requests to GOI offices and a knowledge management portal as initiatives under e-governance.
- (iii) **RTI Fellowships** is granted to fellows in RTI for journalists, social activists, researchers & trainers in the field of RTI. It is open to professionals in the age group of 25 to 40 years.
- (iv) Short Term **Internships** are granted to Undergraduates pursuing the five year integrated course in Law and pursuing Graduation in Law to conduct an analysis of RTI application in Select Public Authorities.
- (v) **RTI Week** is celebrated every year during 5th — 12th October for which State Information Commissions are provided financial assistance, for taking up various activities which may include conducting workshops, seminars, press-meets, competition in colleges on RTI related themes, etc.
