SATARK NAGRIK SANGATHAN  
October 11, 2022  

Key findings of the “Report Card on the Performance of Information Commissions in India, 2021-22”  
(हिंदी में प्रेस विज्ञापन अंग्रेजी के बाद है)

- 2 out of 29 Information Commissions are defunct
- 12 commissions have an estimated waiting time of one year or more to dispose a matter

Tomorrow (October 12, 2022) marks 17 years of implementation of the RTI Act in India. The law has empowered millions of people to seek information and hold the government accountable. Under the RTI law, information commissions are the final appellate authority and are mandated to safeguard and facilitate people’s fundamental right to information. Information commissions (ICs) have been set up at the central level (Central Information Commission- CIC) and in the states (state information commissions- SICs).

Satark Nagrik Sangathan has compiled a report on the performance of information commissions across the country based on information accessed under the RTI Act. The key findings of the report titled, ‘Report Card on the Performance of Information Commissions in India, 2021-22’ is attached.

The report examines the performance of all 29 commissions in India in terms of the number of appeals and complaints registered and disposed by them, number of pending cases, estimated waiting time for the disposal of an appeal/complaint filed in each commission, frequency of violations penalised by commissions and transparency in their working.

The highlights include:
- 2 Information Commissions- Jharkhand and Tripura- are completely defunct as no new commissioners have been appointed upon the incumbents demitting office.
- 4 commissions are currently headless- the SICs of Manipur, Telangana, West Bengal and Andhra Pradesh are functioning without a Chief.
- 2,12,443 appeals and complaints were registered between July 1, 2021 and June 30, 2022 by 25 information commissions for whom relevant information was available. During the same time period, 2,27,950 cases were disposed by 27 commissions for which information could be obtained.
- 3,14,323 appeals and complaints were pending on June 30, 2022 in the 26 information commissions, from which data was obtained. The backlog of appeals/complaints has been steadily increasing in commissions. The 2019 assessment had found that as of March 31, 2019, a total of 2,18,347 appeals/complaints were pending in the 26 information commissions from which data was obtained which climbed to 2,86,325 as of June 30, 2021.
- Using the average monthly disposal rate and the pendency in commissions, the time it would take for an appeal/complaint to be disposed was computed. The assessment shows that West Bengal SIC would take an estimated 24 years & 3 months to dispose a matter. A matter filed on July 1, 2022 would be disposed in the year 2046 at the current monthly rate of disposal! In Odisha and Maharashtra SICs, estimated time for disposal is more than 5 years and in Bihar more than 2 years. The assessment shows that 12 commissions would take 1 year or more to dispose a matter.
- The analysis of penalties imposed by information commissions shows that the commissions did not impose penalties in 95% of the cases where penalties were potentially imposable.
- Section 25 of the RTI Act obligates each commission to prepare a report on the implementation of the provisions of this Act every year which is to be laid before Parliament or the state legislature. 20 out of 29 ICs (69%) have not published their annual report for 2020-21.

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