

State Chief Information Commissioner (CIC), Sh. Khurshid Ahmad Ganai, chaired a Round Table on “*Underscoring the Importance of Right to Information (RTI) Act*” at DC Office Kathua today the 24<sup>th</sup> May 2017.

Sh. Ramesh Kumar (IAS), Deputy Commissioner Kathua , Sh. Suleman Choudhary (IPS), SSP Kathua , Sh. Pardeep Kumar (KAS), Secretary JKSIC , ADC and other district officers were present in the roundtable.

First Appellate Authorities (FAAs), Public Information Officers (PIOs) and RTI Activists of the district participated in the roundtable.

The CIC said that the essence of the Act is to ensure transparency, accountability and corruption free governance. “RTI Act is not merely a provision but a potent tool to strengthen democracy and promote good governance”. CIC maintained that suo moto disclosure of information under Section 4 needs to be followed in letter and spirit by all Public Authorities.

He emphasized the need to use RTI Act for expediting and monitoring development works in the far flung areas for which the knowledge of the RTI Act and the Rules thereof was necessary. He appealed to the activists to use the RTI Act for legitimate purposes only so that no undue pressure is brought on the PIOs and Public Authorities.

He appealed to the PIOs and FAAs to comply with the provisions of J&K RTI Act, 2009 and called for timely response in providing information so that the allegations of delay or concealment of information are no longer made by anyone. Stressing on sustained mass awareness at grassroots level.

The CIC advised the DC Kathua to take steps for creating awareness among the general public and also training of the PIOs and FAAs in implementation of the RTI Act in its right spirit.