

Sh. Khurshid Ahmed Ganai (Retd. IAS), State Chief Information Commissioner, 17, presided over a roundtable / workshop on J&K RTI Act 2009 for the Public Information Officers and First Appellate Authorities of Udhampur District at DC office on 14th of June 2017.

Deputy Commissioner Sh. Niraj Kumar, SSP Udhampur Sh. Rayees Mohd Bhat, ADC MS. Avny Lavasa, ACR Sh. Subash Chander Dogra, CPO Sh. Ashok Khajuria besides all district and block level officers attended the Roundtable. Addressing the participants, the CIC stressed that the RTI Act has strengthened democracy and is still in the process of evolution in the State. He informed that over 27,000 RTI applications were received during the year 2016-17 while about 30,000 applications were received in the year 2014-15. The CIC explained various features and important sections of the Act to the PIOs and FAAs through a power point presentation during the roundtable. He further highlighted Section-4 of the Act which deals with the suo-motto disclosure of information by PIOs besides various obligations of public authorities under the Act. The CIC further emphasized on the role of PIOs in facilitating the Right to Information and asked them to carefully examine the applications and dispose them as per the provisions of RTI Act.

The CIC also threw light on the powers of State Information Commission to impose penalty under Section-17 of the Act. He said that a penalty at the rate of Rs 250 per day or a maximum of Rs 25,000 can be imposed on PIOs in case of delay. "In addition to this, the SIC can also recommend disciplinary action against the PIO who has without any cause refused to receive an application, failed to provide information within the specified time, knowingly given incorrect, incomplete or misleading information or obstructed in any manner in furnishing the information", he informed.

The CIC directed Deputy Commissioner for organising more such workshops and training programmes on RTI in the district. He also stressed on the need for the training of PIOs and FAAs on the implementation of RTI, in various institutes like IMPA.