

Chief Information Commissioner emphasizes on RTI for Development

While chairing the Roundtable with the Public Information Officers (PIOs) and First Appellate Authorities (FAAs) of District Budgam, the Chief Information Commissioner, J&K, Shri Khurshid A.Ganai stated that use of Right to Information for obtaining information about the development projects and schemes has the potential for improving the quality of implementation and delivery on ground. The Roundtable held on 18 July at D.C office Budgam was attended by the District Development Commissioner, Budgam Shri Mohammad Haroon Malik, SP Budgam, Shri Amod, PIOs and FAAs, prominent RTI activists namely Dr.Raja Muzaffer Bhat, Shri Irfan Banka, Shri Bashir Budgami, Shri Nazir Ahmad, Shri Sajad Rasool, Shri Shahnawaz Sultan, Shri Mohd Ramzan and Shri Ab.Rehman. The CIC made a Power Point Presentation on J&K Right to Information Act, 2009 and the Rules and clarified many issues namely duties and responsibilities of the PIOs and FAAs, provision of assistance to the RTI applicants by the PIO under proviso to Section 6(1) and Section 7(4), transfer of application to the concerned Public Authority under Section 6(3), use of exemptions under Section 8, use of Section 11 pertaining to 3rd Party information etc. The CIC stated that the poor implementation of Section 4 by the Public Authorities for suo-moto disclosure of information through websites and less than desired emphasis on Section 23 pertaining to creation of awareness about the RTI by the Government were the key areas which require more attention from the Public Authorities, Administrative Departments and the

State Government. The CIC also called upon RTI activists to discourage the abuse of RTI for personal purposes or for settling personal scores. The CIC highlighted the real objectives of the RTI Law namely transparency, accountability and corruption free governance as mentioned in the preamble of the J&K RTI Act, 2009.

The DDC Budgam thanked the State Information Commission for organizing the Roundtable at Budgam with the PIOs and FAAs and hoped that the Roundtable will prove to be extremely beneficial for promoting use of RTI for bringing about more transparency in administration in district Budgam. He thanked the CIC for offering clarifications on a number of issues in the Act and hoped that SIC will organize more Roundtables in future. He assured the CIC that the district administration will also hold seminars and Roundtables at Block and Tehsil levels to carry the message of RTI to the people and will also take other measures for demystification of procedures to improve the delivery of services and quality of governance. He also said that use of Public Service Guarantee Act, 2011 alongwith RTI can prove a game changer in ushering in good governance.
