

Press note

State Information Commission asks Prisons Department to put in place an effective mechanism for RTI

In the 2nd Appeal titled Syed Shabir Ahmad Shah V/S First Appellate Authority(FAA) and Public Information Officer (PIO) O/o DGP (Prisons) Department, J&K, the Chief Information Commissioner (SIC) in his order dated 22.12.2017 has asked the Public Authority i.e Prisons Department to put in place an effective system for receipt of RTI applications and 1st Appeals in the Department and provide adequate training to the PIOs and the FAAs of the department to ensure proper access to information to the RTI applicants. An effective RTI mechanism, the CIC observed, will help in improved redressal of grievances with the Prisons Department

In a number of similar orders in 2nd appeals issued in exercise of powers vested in the State Information Commission under Section 16(9)(a) of the J&K RTI Act,2009, the State Information Commission has been issuing directions to the Public Authorities through their Heads of Departments to improve the functioning of the RTI Cell in their offices and to sensitise their PIOs and FAAs towards their duties and responsibilities under the J&K RTI Act,2009.

In another land mark order in 2nd Appeal viz Sajjad Ahmad Wani V/S FAA & PIO J&K SSB, the State Information Commission directed the Service Selection Board to include selection procedure and eligibility criteria for selection in the advertisement notices for jobs. In response, the J&K SSB has informed the State Information Commission that they have

decided to implement the orders of the State Information Commission and are now publishing selection procedure and eligibility criteria in their advertisements for government jobs.

As on ending December,2017 the State Information Commission has disposed of 276 2nd Appeals during the period March-December,2017 whereas the pending number of appeals as on the same date was 185. Similarly, the Statement Information Commission also disposed of 16 complaints filed under Section 15 of the J&K RTI Act,2009.

The State Information Commission has been monitoring compliance of Government Departments under Section 4 of the J&K RTI Act to ensure suo-moto and mandatory disclosure of information in terms of Section 4(1)(b). The State Information Commission is holding Roundtables at District level to familiarise the PIOs and FAAs with their duties and responsibilities under the Act.

In another decision taken on 8th January, the State Information Commission has decided to publish all the pending Annual Reports of the Commission by or before 15th April,2018