

**PUNJAB STATE INFORMATION COMMISSION
RED CROSS BUILDING, NEAR ROSE GARDEN,
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Shri Ankit Jain, S/o Shri Yashpal Jain,
1006, Morniwala Khuh,
Dera Bassi, Distt:Mohali.

Versus

.....Appellant

Public Information Officer

O/o Principal Secretary,
Local Govt., Punjab,
Chandigarh.

First Appellate Authority

O/o Principal Secretary,
Local Govt., Punjab,
Chandigarh.

....Respondents

AC No. 4944 of 2022

Present: i) **Appellant- absent.**
ii) **Shri Gagandeep Singh, Senior Assistant, Local Govt.-4 Branch**
O/o Principal Secretary, Local Govt., Pb. on behalf of the PIO-in person.

ORDER:

1. The RTI application is dated 06.06.2022 vide which the appellant has sought information as enumerated in his RTI application. First appeal was filed with the First Appellate Authority (hereinafter FAA) on 09.08.2022 and the second appeal was filed in the Commission on 19.10.2022 under Section 19 of the Right to Information Act, 2005 (hereinafter RTI Act).

2. The notice of hearing was issued to the parties for 26.12.2022. Accordingly, the case has been heard today. Shri Ankit Jain, appellant has not come present to attend the hearing in person before the Bench or through cisco webex. He has, however, sent an e.mail that due death of his mother, he is unable to attend the hearing and sought adjournment.

3. Shri Gagandeep Singh, Senior Assistant, Local Govt.-4 Branch, O/o Principal Secretary, Local Govt., Punjab comes present to attend the hearing in person before the Bench. He states that the appellant has sought information regarding purchase orders and work orders in respect of all Municipal Corporations and Municipal Councils in the State of Punjab. He further states that this matter is dealt with by two Chief Engineer, Municipal Corporations and Chief Engineer, Municipal Councils in the office of Director, Local Government, Punjab, who, in turn, are required to collect the same from all the Municipal Corporations and Municipal Councils in the State of Punjab and all these have different PIOs. He also produces before the Bench a letter to this effect, which is taken on record.

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4. The Bench on perusal of RTI application as also on hearing the version of the respondent, observes that there are more than one PIO involved in the present appeal case. The Bench is of the view that the appellant cannot seek information in single RTI application from multiple public authorities. A Full Bench of State Information Commission, Punjab has in Complaint Case No.2903 of 2011 decided on 13.01.2012, ruled as under:-

“We hold that under Section (3) of the Act *ibid*, the legal obligation of a PIO who receives a request for information under Section 6(1) of the Act is limited to transfer this request to only one public authority that hold the information. This obligation does not extend to transfer the request to multiple authorities.

5. The Bench further observes that the information asked for by the appellant has to be collected, collated and compiled, thereby resulting in wastage of time of multiple PIOs involved. The Hon’ble Supreme Court in matter of CBSE vs. Aditya Bandopadhyay, (2011) 8 SCC 497, held as under:-

“67. Indiscriminate and impractical demands or directions under the RTI Act for disclosure of all and sundry information (unrelated to transparency and accountability in the functioning of public authorities and eradication of corruption) would be counterproductive as it will adversely affect the efficiency of the administration and result in the executive getting bogged down with the non-productive work of collecting and furnishing information. The Act should not be allowed to be misused or abused, to become a tool to obstruct the national development and integration, or to destroy the peace, tranquility and harmony among its citizens. Nor should it be converted into a tool of oppression or intimidation of honest officials striving to do their duty. The nation does not want a scenario where 75% of the staff of public authorities spends 75% of their time in collecting and furnishing information to applicants instead of discharging their regular duties. The threat of penalties under the RTI Act and the pressure of the authorities under the RTI Act should not lead to employees of a public authorities prioritizing “information furnishing”, at the cost of their normal and regular duties.

6. In view of the above, it does not seem to be appropriate for the appellant to seek information which may entail engaging 75% of the employees of a public authority to collect and compile the information for furnishing the same to the appellant. The Bench advises the appellant to go for seeking information by filing separate RTI application before a specific public authority who has its separate PIO.

7. With the aforesaid discussions, **the instant appeal case is disposed off and closed.** Copies of the order be sent to the concerned parties.

**Chandigarh
26.12.2022**

**Sd/-
(Lt Gen Ajae Kumar Sharma(Retd))
State Information Commission, Punjab**