

**PUNJAB STATE INFORMATION COMMISSION
RED CROSS BUILDING, NEAR ROSE GARDEN,
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Shri Ashok Kumar Watts,
H.No. B-V-1534, Street No.1,
Lajpat Nagar, Abohar,
Distt:Fazilka.

.....Complainant

Versus

Public Information Officer
O/o Municipal Corporation,
Abohar, District Fazilka.

First Appellate Authority
O/o Commissioner,
O/o Municipal Corporation,
Abohar, District Fazilka.

....Respondents

AC No. 4950 of 2022

- Present:**
- i) **Shri Ashok Kumar Watts, appellant- in person.**
 - ii) **Smt.Reeta Rani, Inspector & Gurwinder Kaur, Pension Clerk, Accounts Branch, Municipal Corporation, Abohar- in person.**
 - iii) **Shri Jaswinder Singh, Sanitary Inspector, Municipal Corporation, Abohar.**
 - iv) **Shri Pankaj, Supervisor (Outsourced), Sale of Land Branch, Municipal Corporation, Abohar- in person.**
- **On behalf of the PIOs O/o Municipal Corporation, Amritsar.**

ORDER:

1. The RTI application is dated 19.07.2022 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 22.08.2022 and the second appeal was filed in the Commission on 20.10.2022 under Section 19 of the Right to Information Act, 2005 (hereinafter RTI Act).
2. The notice of hearing was issued to the parties for 21.12.2022. Accordingly, the case has been heard today. Shri Ashok Kumar Watts, appellant comes present to attend the hearing in person before the Bench and states that he has not been given correct and complete information so far.
3. Smt. Reeta Rani, Inspector and Smt. Gurwinder Kaur, Pension Clerk, Municipal Corporation, Abohar come present in person before the Bench. Smt. Reeta Rani states that information relating to Accounts Branch on point No.1,2,3,4,5,6, 7 & 15 has been supplied to the appellant vide letter dated 17.08.2022.
4. Shri Jaswinder Singh, Sanitation Inspector, M.C. Abohar comes present in person before the Bench and states that information on point No.5,8, & 9 relating to Sanitation Branch has been supplied to the appellant vide letter dated 19.12.2022.
5. Shri Pankaj, Supervisor (O/S), Sale of Land Branch, M.C. Abohar comes present in person before the Bench to attend the hearing on behalf of PIO and states that information on points No.11, 12, 13 & 14 has been supplied to the appellant vide letter dated 28.08.2022. The Chief Sanitary Inspector-cum-PIO has stated that the information asked for by the appellant is voluminous as it involves collection, collating and compilation of information and has also referred to a judgment of Hon'ble Supreme Court of India in Civil Appeal No.6554 of 2011- Central Board of Secondary Education & Anr. Vs. Aditya Bandopadhyay & Ors. wherein it has been held that 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 the applicant instead of discharging their own duties.

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6. After hearing the version of the officials present to attend the hearing on behalf of the PIO, the Bench enquires from them as to how many Branches the present RTI application relates to and it is told by them the same relates to Accounts Branch, Sale of Land Branch, Sanitation Branch and O&M Cell and each one of them has a separate PIO.

7. Post deliberations, it transpires that the information sought by the appellant involves more than one PIO. Further, the Bench observes that the PIOs concerned have made efforts to collect, collate and compile information and thereafter, same has been provided to the appellant vide letters quoted in paras-3,4 & 5 above. However, the appellant in a defiant manner has stated that information is misleading and incomplete. The Bench tries to discuss the issues raised, information provided and multiple PIOs involved. The response of the appellant to this was arrogant and in a manner amounting to contempt of court. The appellant remarks that he will go to Hon'ble Punjab and Haryana High Court and get the order stayed.

8. The Bench is of the view that adequate information stands provided and as per aforesaid discussions, the Bench is also 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.

9. 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.

10. 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. Moreover, in the present appeal case, the information as existing in official records also stands provided to the appellant.

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

**Chandigarh
21.12.2022**

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