



Centre for Peace and
Development Initiatives

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CPDI Right to Information Watch

Greetings from the Centre for Peace and Development Initiatives, (CPDI). Issued every month, CPDI Right to Information Watch takes stock of RTI legislative landscape in the country with focus on development pertaining to RTI legislation and implementation of these laws.

RTI Legislative Landscape

Shroud of mystery around federal RTI bill, the irony is unmistakable

It is in the nature of rumor mills to start churning out all sorts of stuff in the absence of credible information. This is exactly what is happening with regard to the whereabouts of federal RTI bill. If Mr. Nasir Jamal, DG, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting is to be believed, [grilling](#) of Federal Information Minister on February 03, 2016, by senators for failing to table right to information bill in the parliament, as we reported in the last edition, has made some impact. In an event organized by CPDI, Media Matters for Democracy, UNESCO, and the Embassy of the Kingdom of Netherlands, on May 03, 2016 to celebrate World Press Freedom day, Mr. Jamal shared that the ministry is trying to further improve the law. RTI activists were pleasantly surprised to know that one of the suggestion included in the draft law is that anyone would be able to have access to information and not only the citizens which is presently the case. This will surely further improve this law which has been [highly rated by Centre for Law and Democracy](#), a reputed organization based in Canada that ranks RTI laws of the world on the yardstick of standards of right to information legislation. As we shared in the last edition, according to CLD, if the draft RTI bill is passed in its present shape, it will be making 11 points improvement upon Serbian RTI law by scoring 146 points out of 150. The only problem is that we do not know for sure as to what is going on with regard to the process of finalizing the draft law. Mr. Jamal said that as the draft law is still in the process, they could not share the proposals being discussed. CPDI maintains that there is no harm if the ministry takes RTI experts on board. We will keep you posted.

RTI in Action

CPDI has long been demanding Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Information Commission to withdraw the condition of providing copy of CNIC when lodging complaint. We have always maintained that asking each citizen to provide copy of CNIC is tantamount to assuming citizens to be guilty till they prove otherwise. Furthermore, we have also maintained that Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

Information Commission should only seek copy of CNIC from a complainant if there is a strong reason. The good news is that there is positive development on this issue. In the workshop held on the World Press Freedom day, the participants of the working group on right to information raised this issue with Mr. Abdul Matin, Information Commissioner, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Information Commission. He promised that this conditionality will be withdrawn. The participants also raised the issue of compensating complainants with the fine money collected from public officials. There is no precedent from other countries for such compensation and fine amount is collected by the government. Furthermore, such a practice is surely bound to create animosity between the applicant and an official each time an official is asked to pay fine as compensation to an applicant.

Hopefully, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Information Commission will also give serious consideration to this issue.

Transparency and Right to Information Program

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