



Centre for Peace and
Development Initiatives

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CPDI Right to Information Watch

Editorial:

Pakistan is stagnant on the road of right to information. Federal and Provincial governments enacted the right to information laws that merely stays on paper and await implementation. Right of Access to Information Act 2017, passed by federal government is not implemented. Neither the information requests are answered nor does the appellate body exist. This situation has put the RTI users and general masses in the state of overhanging between law and implementation. Furthermore, the Federal Ombudsman is also not responsible for handling the complaints lodged under Freedom of Information Ordinance 2002 and Right of Access to Information Act 2017. Information request go unanswered, complaints cannot be lodged since there is not any appellate body and law does not provide the choice of internal review, what other option is left for RTI users? Political strain on government has sadly resulted in the overlook of other social and economic strains. Even the newly appointed State Minister for Finance has done little for Open Government Partnership.

RTI Legislative Landscape

Ship of Punjab Information goes again without the captain

Provincial appellate body in Punjab established under Punjab Transparency and Right to Information Act 2013 is non-functional in the absence of Information Commissioners. It has been more than 8 months that the government has not appointed Information Commissioners. First set of Information Commissioners completed their tenure in March/April 2017; new chief came for period of less than 2 weeks but resigned. CPDI and other civil society organization are training public information officers in Punjab but the week and non-function enforcement mechanism has derailed the direct flow of information. The Punjab government has successfully nullified its own RTI system.

Sindh Transparency and Right to Information Act 2016 may die in the womb without implementation

The provincial government of Sindh had successfully enacted the Sindh Transparency and Right to Information Act 2016 but [Sindh govt fails to establish information commission within prescribed time](#). The provincial government was supposed to establish commission within 100 days but outstandingly it has been more than 6 months that the government has not taken any

measures to implement the law. CPDI penned several advocacy letters to CM, Secretary Information and Sindh Information Department, as response of letters, information department maintained that the summary had been sent to CM office for establishment of Sindh Information Commission since Sep 2017 but the CM office has done little for the establishment of information commission till date. It's not clear that when the law will see light of implementation.

Public Access to Information, still not ensured in federal

The Appellate body under new law i.e. Pakistan Commission on Access to Information is not established yet. According to the Right of Access to Information Act, PM of Pakistan is bound to establish information commission within 6 months. 4 months have elapsed but little has been done for the rightful implementation of the said Act, most of the RTI requests are not responded and information seekers have nowhere to lodge complaints.

RTI in Action

The weak RTI law in Balochistan, dysfunctional Punjab Information Commission, and Lacunas in KP right to information act, non implementation of Sindh Transparency and Right to Information act and right of access to information act 2017 has made public access to information a dream in Pakistan. All the laws await rightful implementation. There is no use of making good RTI laws if they are not to be implemented. CPDI has held press conference in Karachi and wrote a multifold of advocacy letters in federal and provinces and called for implementation of RTI.

Transparency and Right to Information Program

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