



Centre for Peace and  
Development Initiatives

June 2018

## CPDI Right to Information Watch

### Editorial:

The month of May went like a speedball on the path of RTI in Pakistan. The federal and provincial governments before dissolution took major steps for the [implementation of right to information](#). Forthwith, Pakistan has five RTI laws in place i.e Right of Access to Information Act 2017, Punjab Transparency and Right to Information Act 2013, KP Right to Information Act 2013, Sindh Transparency and Right to Information Act 2016 and Balochistan Freedom of Information Act 2005. The independent appellate forums were not established in the province of Sindh and [Federal](#) whereas both governments had crossed the lawful deadlines long ago. Just before completing their tenure, the respective governments announced the establishment of overdue information commissions, which is appreciable. However crucial task is yet to be done which the future will unfold. Moreover the government of Punjab also appointed new information Commissions in Punjab Information Commission after the positions have been lying vacant for more than a year.

### RTI Legislative Landscape

#### **Punjab Government Appoints Information Commissioners After a year**

[CPDI has welcomed the Appointment of Information Commissioners in PIC.](#) On 9th May 2018, the government of Punjab finally issued a notification for the appointment of two information commissioners in Punjab Information Commission. Though late, but it is appreciable that the outgoing government did the essential task. It should not be repressed that first batch of commissioners in PIC completed their tenure in May/April 2017, till then the posts had been lying vacant except for a brief period when Chief was appointed but resigned soon after. CPDI raised voice through various platforms [for the appointment of information commissioners](#). CPDI also greeted the newly appointed information commissioners and endorsed that the Strength of Commission lies with commissioners only.

#### **Establishment of Sindh Information Commission**

Outgoing provincial government of Sindh did not take the establishment of appellate forum under RTI law serious in its tenure. Interestingly, just before the tail end of its tenure, it announced the establishment of [Sindh information commission on 30th May 2018](#). The

provincial government was bound to establish appellate forum within 100 days from the enactment of Sindh RTI law, but did the undone task after a year.

Time and again, CPDI raised the voice in mainstream media i.e [Federal, Sindh govts. miss deadline for information commission formation.](#)

### **Establishment of Pakistan Commission on Access to Information**

The federal government issued a [notification on 29th May](#) for the establishment of Pakistan Commission on Access to Information. The commission will deal with the RTI complaints lodged by the citizens at federal level. The Appellate body under RAI Act 2017 i.e [Pakistan Commission on Access to Information was supposed to be established with 6 months.](#) Last month, sitting Judge of Islamabad High Court Mr. Athar Minallah issued notices to PM Secretariat and Attorney General Office for the immediate establishment of Information Commission.

### **Balochistan Lagging Far Behind In the Race of RTI**

[Provincial law of RTI in Balochistan is the weakest in Pakistan.](#) We have five right to information laws but the Balochistan Freedom of Information Act 2005 is the most ineffective and weakest. Despite of several advocacy efforts from civil society, nothing has been achieved. A sudden progress was visible last month, when CM Balochistan Mr. Abdul Qudus Bazinjo passed a new Balochistan Right to Information Act 2018 on 18th April. The BRTI Act 2018 awaits approval of the provincial cabinet till date. The government has completed its tenure but Balochistan still lags far behind in the race of RTI. People of Balochistan have yet to see the light of effective RTI law.

## **RTI in Action**

Pakistan possesses effective RTI laws but the implementation is at slow pace. Awareness about the people's fundamental right to know is also very low. Now the appellate forums are working in KP and Punjab. Oversight bodies are also announced in Sindh and Federal level. These developments should incur right to know in people's domain where RTI becomes prerogative of people. Federal and provincial commissions are responsible for raising awareness about RTI, holding training of public officials and effective complaint redressal mechanism. RTIs filed by CPDI often reveal the shocking data; in this month RTI filed by [CPDI raised social issue in district Toba Tek Singh Punjab.](#)

### **Transparency and Right to Information Program**

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Centre for Peace and Development Initiatives, Pakistan (CPDI-Pakistan)

Tel: +92 (0) 51-8312794, 8312795

URL: [www.cpdipakistan.org](http://www.cpdipakistan.org)