



Centre for Peace and
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CPDI Right to Information Watch

Editorial:

Right to information is a fundamental human right and Constitution of Pakistan protects people's right to know under article 19 A. Except Balochistan, Federal and provincial governments have duly enacted effective RTI laws and have proceeded with the implementation. Course of right to information in Pakistan is on a sturdy path and heading with a slow pace but there is a hope. What has put the whole RTI concept in jeopardy is the restriction on freedom of expression. Freedom of expression and right to information are infused to a larger extent. Pakistan is heading towards general elections 2018 and weak RTI along with less freedom of expression in this crucial time, is a looming threat on democracy.

RTI Legislative Landscape

Punjab Information Commission Becomes Functional

Three information Commissioners have joined the PIC which puts PIC back in action. On 9th May 2018, the government of Punjab finally issued a notification for the appointment of information commissioners in Punjab Information Commission. The Commissioners are committed to out rightly flow information. With presence of Information Commissioners, PIC has become able to implement Punjab Transparency and Right to Information Act 2013 in true letter and spirit.

Sindh Information Commission Established on Paper

[Sindh information commission was announced and notified on 30th May 2018.](#) Caretaker government cannot proceed with other matters relating to Commission. Currently the appointment is just on paper and nothing has been practically carried out in the province. 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.

Establishment of Pakistan Commission on Access to Information

Finally Pakistan Commission on Access to Information is approved by the former PM Shhaid Khaqan Abbasi but the progress in not seen yet. Approval was given on the last day of the government's tenure. Moreover the federal budget 2018-2019 did not entail budget for the development of RTI commission at federal level. This has disappointed the RTI users and vigilant citizens who are aware of the power of RTI. Upcoming government should pay heed to the

establishment of oversight body to deal with the complaints lodged under Right of Access to Information Act 2017.

Balochistan Lagging Far Behind In the Race of RTI

Former Chief Minister Balochistan Mr. Abdul Qudus Bazinjo approved a new Balochistan Right to Information Act 2018 on 17th April 2018. The BRTI Act 2018 awaits approval of the provincial cabinet till date. The government has completed its tenure but the Act is not approved by the Cabinet. People of Balochistan have yet to see the light of effective RTI law. It is hoped that the new provincial government will pay attention to the effective legislation on RTI in the province. Freedom of information Ordinance 2005 is a weak RTI law which does not ensure the flow of information.

RTI in Action

Right to Information, freedom of information and freedom of expression are under threat in Pakistan. [Pakistan's Media Face Increased Crackdown on Free Speech](#). There are unprecedented restrictions on media and journalists are being targeted. Media forums are protecting their freedom of speech and right to information. On the other hand, the overall environment of free flow of information is dark in government departments where the oversight bodies established under RTI laws are not proactive.

Transparency and Right to Information Program

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