



Centre for Peace and
Development Initiatives

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CPDI Right to Information Watch

Editorial:

With the PTI led government in power, common man is anticipating a leap forward in transparency, accountability, access to information and citizen participation in government matters. Till date, there has been no substantial advancement in the area of Access to information. The commissions are still not functional in Sindh and Federal. Not only this, the relevant ministers are also indifferent of the status of RTI legislation and implementation in Pakistan. Some officials were seen giving remarks which proved their aloofness on the subject. PTI was the pioneer to bring 1st generation laws in Pakistan through KP RTI Act 2013. It is anticipated that the PTI will follow the suit in Sindh, Federal and Balochistan.

On 28th September, International Day for Universal access to information was celebrated worldwide. [CPDI also commemorated the international right to know day with zeal](#)

RTI Legislative Landscape

Implementation and Status of Online Proactive Disclosure in Punjab

[Complaint redressal mechanism](#) in Punjab information commission is becoming efficient and robust since May 2018. Not only this, the commission is also holding several events to spread awareness about people's fundamental right to know. Fayaz ul Hassan Chohan, Provincial minister for information and culture has indicated that reforms will be brought in the Punjab T& RTI Act 2013. [It is yet to be seen that the reforms will be progressive or restrictive.](#) Categorically he has said that the Punjab T&RTI Act 2013 will be made similar to KP RTI Laws. However, the experts and civil society apprehend that Punjab RTI law is better than KP RTI Law.

CPDI conducted a comprehensive study on the status of online proactive disclosure of information in provincial departments of Punjab. The studies show that there is a significant lack of online disclosure of information and compliance with section 4 of Punjab RTI Law is very low. [The detailed report and score sheet is available on website of CPDI.](#)

Sindh Transparency and Right to Information Act 2016

Previous government notified information commissioners for Sindh information Commission in May 2018. Five months have elapsed, the notified information commissioners are waiting for the establishment of Sindh Information Commission. The status of Sindh RTI law is unpromising. Not only the appellate forum is non-functional but the awareness regarding Sindh RTI Law is

very low. CPDI has raised demand and the government is stating that the commission will be formed soon. Sikandar Ali hullo, notified commissioner in Sindh Information Commissioner participated in the Open Discussion on International Right to Know Day organized by CPDI. He said that the commission will be made functional by October 2018.

Establishment of Pakistan Commission on Access to Information

Fawad Chaudhry is the newly appointed Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting, National and Literary Heritage. He said in one of the event held on international right to know day that the Federal Information Commission will be established soon. This is not new and sounds like a political statement. As a response of letter sent to Information Ministry in Feb 2018, CPDI received the same response but nothing has been in this regard till date.

Public Information Officers are also not appointed in most departments. CPDI has also written letters for designation of PIOs to all federal ministries.

Balochistan Lagging Far Behind In the Race of RTI

The Balochistan Right to Information Act 2018 awaits approval of the provincial cabinet of previous government. Newly appointed Chief Minister of Balochistan, [Jam Kamal Khan](#) shall look into the matter as a priority and continue with the undone agenda of previous government. It is hoped that the 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 free flow of information. CPDI is also planning to reach the provincial minister for Information, Zahoor Ahmed to raise demand.

RTI in Action

28th sep, 2018 is celebrated as international right to know day all around the world. This year, A movement on RTI was also seen in Pakistan. The movement was much impactful and active then the previous years. A large number of civil society organizations organized small and mega events on the day. There are many CSO alliances and coalitions now working on RTI in Pakistan. CRTI Partners conducted activities in more than 16 districts. In Islamabad, CPDI held an open discussion on Sep 28th which comprised of panel discussion on all RTI laws in Pakistan. Like every year CPDI conferred [RTI Champion awards 2018](#) and also launched [two reports on the status of Online proactive disclosure in Punjab and KP](#) . The KP RTI Commission and Punjab Information Commission also held several events related to international right to know day. The civil society is in action on RTI. Now the government has to step forward.

Transparency and Right to Information Program

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

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

URL: www.cpd-pakistan.org