

CONTENTS

	PAGE
<i>About the Authors</i>	I-5
<i>Preface to Second Edition</i>	I-7
<i>Abbreviations Used</i>	I-9
<i>Chapter-heads</i>	I-11

CHAPTER 1 | INTRODUCTION

1.1	Introduction to RTI Act, 2005	1
1.2	What is RTI Act, 2005?	1
1.3	Historical background	2
1.4	Constitutional provisions	3
1.5	What powers does it provide?	4
1.6	Preamble and its Role	4
1.6.1	Objectives of the RTI Act	5
1.6.2	Interpretation of the RTI Act	7
1.7	Criticism of the RTI Act	9
1.7.1	Only rights	9
1.7.2	Vexatious applications	9
1.7.3	Cost of implementing RTI Act	9
1.7.4	Lack of resources	9
1.7.5	No attitudinal change	9
1.7.6	No redressal of grievance	9
1.8	Expectations from the Government servants	9

CHAPTER 2 | WHICH ORGANISATIONS ARE COVERED?

2.1	Public Authority	<i>11</i>
	2.1.1 Concept of a public authority	<i>11</i>
	2.1.2 Definition of public authority	<i>11</i>
2.2	Meaning of Terms	<i>12</i>
	2.2.1 Established or Constituted	<i>12</i>
	2.2.2 Authority or Body or institution of self-Government	<i>13</i>
	2.2.3 Includes	<i>14</i>
	2.2.4 Substantial financing	<i>14</i>
	2.2.5 Substantially financed Non-Government Organisation (NGO)	<i>17</i>
	2.2.6 Funding by appropriate Government	<i>20</i>
	2.2.7 Owned or controlled	<i>20</i>
	2.2.8 Appropriate Government	<i>23</i>
	2.2.9 Competent authority	<i>24</i>
2.3	Function of the Organisation	<i>24</i>
2.4	Are different offices of an organisation different public authority?	<i>25</i>
2.5	List of some public authorities	<i>26</i>
2.6	Organisations not held as a public authority	<i>31</i>
2.7	Applicant has to produce evidence	<i>34</i>
2.8	Obtaining information about private organisations	<i>34</i>
2.9	Expanding scope of public authority	<i>35</i>
	2.9.1 Public duty	<i>35</i>
	2.9.2 Public Private Partnership (PPP)	<i>36</i>
	2.9.3 'State' as per the Constitution	<i>37</i>
	2.9.4 Judicial pronouncements regarding State	<i>37</i>
	2.9.5 Organisations covered under 'State' are covered under RTI	<i>38</i>
2.10	DoPT is not the Jury	<i>38</i>

CHAPTER 3 | DESIGNATION OF OFFICERS - PIO, APIO, FAA

3.1	Who is a Public Information Officer (PIO)?	39
3.2	Designation of Public Information Officer (PIO)	39
3.2.1	Number of PIO	39
3.2.2	Rank of PIO	41
3.2.3	Central pool of PIO data	42
3.3	Deemed PIO	42
3.3.1	Who is a Deemed PIO?	42
3.3.2	Judge as a Deemed PIO	43
3.4	Assistant Public Information Officer (APIO)	44
3.4.1	Who is an Assistant Public Information Officer (APIO)?	44
3.4.2	The Responsibilities of the APIO	44
3.4.3	Post Office as APIO	44
3.4.4	Call Centre as APIO	45
3.4.5	Is the APIO liable for penalty?	45
3.4.6	Can an APIO sign the order?	45
3.5	Who is First Appellate Authority (FAA)?	46
3.6	Duties of First Appellate Authority (FAA)	46
3.7	Training of officials	47
3.8	Designation of transparency officer	47

CHAPTER 4 | PRO-ACTIVE DISCLOSURE

4.1	Obligations of a public authority	48
4.2	What is section 4?	48
4.3	Manner of maintenance of records	51
4.4	Publishing the manuals	52
4.5	Policies or decisions	58
4.6	Administrative or quasi-judicial decisions	59
4.7	Section 4(2)	61
4.8	Pro-active dissemination of information	61

	PAGE
4.8.1	Modes of dissemination of information 62
4.9	Non-Implementation of section 4 63
4.10	Transparency officer 64
4.10.1	Who is a transparency officer? 64
4.10.2	Origin of the transparency officer 64
4.10.3	Rank of transparency officer 65
4.10.4	Job chart of transparency officer 65
4.11	Monitoring the implementation of section 4 67
4.12	What should be in public domain? 68
4.13	Effect of putting information in public domain 70

CHAPTER 5 | WHO CAN FILE AN APPLICATION?

5.1	Citizen 71
5.2	Who should file an application? 71
5.3	Foreigner 72
5.4	Person 72
5.5	Association or company 73
5.5.1	Company cannot file an application 73
5.5.2	Director/manager filing an application on behalf of company 75
5.5.3	Application on letterhead of an organisation 77
5.6	Government officials can file an application 78
5.7	Joint filing of application 78
5.8	Can a minor file an application? 78
5.9	Proof of citizenship 79
5.10	Post Box Number 81

CHAPTER 6 | WHAT CAN BE SOUGHT UNDER THE RTI ACT?

6.1	What is 'Information'? 82
6.1.1	Record 83
6.1.2	Information should be 'Held' 83
6.1.3	Information with private bodies 86

	PAGE
6.1.4	File notings 86
6.1.5	Sample and model 87
6.1.6	Certified copies 88
6.1.7	Cost of certification 90
6.1.8	Video and photographs 90
6.2	What is not 'Information'? 91
6.2.1	Opinion and advice 91
6.2.2	Clarification/Reason/Explanation 92
6.2.3	Interpretation or legal opinion 96
6.2.4	Consultancy/Views 97
6.2.5	Hypothetical question 97
6.2.6	Non-specific query 98
6.2.7	Information should be in 'material form' 99
6.2.8	Information which is not 'held' 99
6.2.9	Information in public domain 100
6.2.10	Letters written by applicant 101
6.3	Information about private bodies 102
6.4	Collection of information from third party 103
6.5	Creating or generating information 106
6.6	Collecting and compiling information 107
6.7	Non-existing information 109
6.8	Grievance resolution 110
6.9	Information not traceable 112
6.10	Inspection 113
6.10.1	Inspection of records 114
6.10.2	Inspection of various objects 115
6.10.3	Inspection of a process 117
6.10.4	Inspection of records in CIC 119
6.10.5	Photography/videography during inspection 119
6.11	Information in CD/DVD 119
6.12	Information provided by other PIO 120
6.13	Information about judicial proceedings 120
6.14	Safety of records 120

CHAPTER 7 | HAS THE APPLICATION BEEN FILED PROPERLY?

7.1	Mode of application	121
7.2	Language of application	121
7.3	Format of application	122
7.4	Reasons for seeking information	123
7.5	Drafting of an application	125
7.6	Details of applicant and PIO	126
7.7	Application fee	127
7.8	Word limit for an application	127
7.9	To whom should an application be filed?	128
7.10	When can an application be filed?	130
7.11	Application should be specific	130
7.12	Single request per application	131
7.13	Applications to organisations under Schedule II	132
7.14	Number of applications that can be filed	132
7.15	Use of Post Box Number	133

CHAPTER 8 | IS THE PAYMENT OF FEE AS PER LAW?

8.1	Provisions regarding fee	135
8.2	Quantum of fee to be paid	136
8.2.1	Central Government	136
8.2.2	State Government	137
8.2.3	Competent authority	137
8.3	Role of information commission	138
8.4	Court verdicts on quantum of fee	139
8.5	Fee accompanying the RTI application	140
8.6	Excess payment of application fee	141
8.7	Cost of providing information	142
8.8	Calculating of the cost of providing information	143
8.9	Cost of certification	145
8.10	Cost of compilation of information	145
8.11	Free of cost information	147

	PAGE
8.12	Mode of payment of fee 149
8.13	Conflict in Fee Rules 150
8.14	Fee for citizens living below poverty line 153
8.15	Misuse of BPL status 154

CHAPTER 9 | HAS THE 'LIFE OR LIBERTY' BEEN CLAIMED?

9.1	What is life and liberty? 156
9.2	View of the Supreme Court 156
9.3	When can the provision be invoked? 158
9.4	Dealing with application invoking 'life or liberty' 159
9.5	Can a third party invoke 'life and liberty'? 160
9.6	Illustrative cases 162

CHAPTER 10 | ACCESSING INFORMATION FROM THE RECORDS

10.1	What are records? 165
10.2	Record maintenance practice 165
10.3	Destruction of records 166
10.4	Destruction of documents after RTI application 167
10.5	Period for record retention is over 169
10.6	Old records 169
10.7	Records not maintained as per policy 171
10.8	Forged documents 172
10.9	Untraceable records 172
10.10	Overview of cases where records are not available 174
10.11	Tampering of records 176

CHAPTER 11 | ROLE OF THE PIO/APIO/ DEEMED PIO

11.1	Responsibilities of a PIO 178
11.2	Judicial Observations about role of a PIO 179
11.3	Procedure under the Act 182

	PAGE
11.3.1	Rejection of application 182
11.3.2	Hearing before the Commission 183
11.3.3	Use of advocate 183
11.4	Protection to a PIO under the Act 185

CHAPTER 12 | DEALING WITH AN APPLICATION

12.1	Types of questions 186
12.2	Role of PIO 187
12.2.1	Know the law 187
12.2.2	Provide reasonable help to the applicant 188
12.2.3	Each application should be responded to 189
12.2.4	Read the application carefully 189
12.2.5	Follow the time limit 190
12.2.6	The specified time frame 190
12.2.7	Deemed refusal 191
12.2.8	Use of Speed Post 191
12.2.9	Change of PIO 192
12.3	Issue of order by the PIO 192
12.3.1	Language of Reply 192
12.3.2	Pass a speaking order 194
12.3.3	Quote the proper section for exemption 195
12.3.4	Provide the details of the appellate authority 196
12.3.5	Retain proof of dispatch of information 196
12.3.6	Reply in the same Mode 197
12.4	Possible Actions by the PIO 197
12.4.1	Providing partial information 197
12.4.2	Information already available on website 197
12.4.3	Information with senior 198
12.4.4	Seeking help of deemed PIO 199
12.4.5	Notice to third party 200
12.4.6	Transfer of application to another public authority 200
12.4.7	Information relating to multiple authorities 203

	PAGE
12.4.8 To whom should the application be transferred?	206
12.4.9 Generating Information	206
12.5 Acquiring the Information	207
12.5.1 Compilation of information	207
12.5.2 Complete or 'all' information	207
12.5.3 Records weeded out/not traceable	208
12.5.4 Inspection of documents	208
12.5.5 Procedure for inspection of documents	208
12.6 Sample format of an order by a PIO	209
12.7 Chronic information seeker	209
12.8 Identity of the applicant	211
12.9 Do's and Don'ts for a PIO	211
12.10 Journey of RTI application	214

CHAPTER 13 | DISPOSAL OF FIRST APPEAL

13.1 Responsibilities of FAA	216
13.2 Additional queries in appeal	217
13.3 Personal hearing by FAA	217
13.4 Disposal of appeal	218
13.5 Ground for refusal of information	220
13.6 Change of FAA	220
13.7 Review of own order by FAA	220
13.8 Can any penalty be levied on the FAA?	221
13.9 Passing of stricture	221

CHAPTER 14 | THIRD PARTY INFORMATION

14.1 Who is a third party?	223
14.2 Meaning of third party information	223
14.3 Significance of third party information	224
14.4 Advocate is a third party	225
14.5 Section 11 is not a ground for rejection	226
14.6 Procedure regarding third party information	226

	PAGE
14.7	Should notice be issued in all cases? 229
14.8	Effect of not issuing a third party notice 230
14.9	Should personal hearing be given to the third party? 231
14.10	File notings by officers 231
14.11	Impleading the third party in a writ 232
14.12	Disclosure despite third party objection 232
14.13	Submissions made by the third party 233
14.14	Public Authority as a third party 234
14.15	Appellate remedy available to the third party 235
14.16	Appeal by public authority 235
14.17	No response by third party 237
14.18	Illustrative cases 237
14.19	Copy of complaint 239
14.20	Inadvertent or incorrect disclosure 241
14.21	Collection of information from the third party 242

CHAPTER 15 | APPLICATION SEEKING VOLUMINOUS INFORMATION

15.1	What is voluminous information? 243
15.2	Section 7(9) 243
15.3	Disproportionate diversion of resources 244
15.4	Can 'disproportionate diversion' be quantified? 246
15.5	Dealing with applications seeking voluminous information 247
15.6	In what form should the information be provided? 247
15.7	Inspection of records 247
15.8	Illustrative cases where information was provided 248
15.9	Seeking support of the RTI applicant 250
15.10	Asking a PIO to collect and tabulate data 250

CHAPTER 16 | OVERRIDING POWERS UNDER THE ACT

16.1	Section 22 252
16.2	Laws conflicting with the RTI Act 254

	PAGE	
16.2.1	Digital Personal Data Protection (DPDP) Act, 2023	255
16.3	Meaning of 'overriding'	255
16.4	Effect of section 22	256
16.5	Alternative procedure for obtaining information	257
16.6	Illustrative Cases	259
16.6.1	Departmental Instructions or Rules	259
16.6.2	Other laws	260
16.6.3	Rules/Law related to examination	264
16.7	Rules made by judiciary	265

CHAPTER 17 | ORGANISATIONS BEYOND THE PURVIEW OF THE ACT

17.1	Section 24	267
17.2	List of organisations	269
17.3	Designation of PIO/FAA	271
17.4	What information can be sought?	271
17.5	Information available with other organisations	273
17.6	Guidelines for public authorities	275
17.7	Allegation	277
17.8	Allegation in the original application	279
17.9	What is corruption ?	279
17.9.1	Types of corruption	280
17.10	What are Human Rights ?	281
17.10.1	Classification of Human Rights	282
17.10.2	Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)	282
17.11	Illustrative cases of corruption or human rights violation	283
17.12	Cases where information was provided	284
17.13	Cases where information was not provided	291
17.14	Administrative/service matters	294
17.15	Costs imposed	297
17.16	Retrospective effect to notification	298
17.17	Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI)	299

CHAPTER 18 | CONSIDERATIONS FOR PASSING AN ORDER

18.1	Exemptions under the RTI Act	300
18.2	Denial only as per the RTI Act	301
18.3	How to invoke the exemptions?	304
18.4	Can part information be provided?	306
18.4.1	Severability clause	307
18.4.2	Examples of severability	307
18.4.3	Severability not applicable in all cases	308
18.4.4	Appeal against the order of severability	308
18.5	Order for denial of information	309
18.6	Grounds for Rejection of RTI Application	309
18.7	Constitutional provisions	309
18.8	Format of an order	310
18.9	Conflict between RTI Act and other Acts	310

CHAPTER 19 | INVOKING EXEMPTION UNDER SECTION 8(1)(a)

19.1	Section 8(1)(a)	311
19.2	Meaning of the terms	311
19.3	Who should determine the applicability of exemption?	313
19.4	Reasons for claiming exemption	313
19.5	Declassification and disclosure policy	314
19.6	Illustrative cases of exemption	315
19.7	Illustrative cases where disclosure was ordered	321

CHAPTER 20 | INVOKING EXEMPTION UNDER SECTION 8(1)(b)

20.1	Section 8(1)(b)	326
20.2	Meaning of terms	326
20.3	Contempt of Court	326

	PAGE
20.4	Proving contempt of court 327
20.5	Information about Sub-Judice cases 327
20.6	Information held as per court orders 330
20.7	Information needed to defend oneself 330
20.8	Should the court be approached for information? 332
20.9	Information about judicial proceedings 334

CHAPTER 21 | INVOKING EXEMPTION UNDER SECTION 8(1)(c)

21.1	Section 8(1)(c) 338
21.2	What is Parliamentary privilege? 338
21.3	Privileges based on rules of procedure and precedents 339
21.4	Committee of privileges 340
21.5	The Code of Civil Procedure, 1908 340
21.6	Parliament and RTI 341
21.7	Joint Parliamentary committee 341
21.8	Authority for determining Privileges 343
21.9	Illustrative cases 344

CHAPTER 22 | INVOKING EXEMPTION UNDER SECTION 8(1)(d)

22.1	Section 8(1)(d) 349
22.1.1	Commercial confidence 349
22.1.2	Trade secret 349
22.1.3	Intellectual Property (IP) 350
22.2	Transactions by public authorities 351
22.3	Tender/Contract documents 354
22.4	Agenda/Minutes of meetings 357
22.5	Confidentiality clause in agreement 358
22.6	Agents of a commercial organization 359
22.7	Public Private Partnership (PPP) 360

	PAGE
22.8 What Information is commercially confidential?	363
22.8.1 Export and import data	364
22.8.2 Price list of items	365
22.8.3 Research	365
22.8.4 Quality of products	366
22.8.5 Copy of agreement	366
22.8.6 Inspection report	367
22.8.7 Balance sheet	367
22.8.8 Information about accidents	368
22.8.9 Genetically modified seeds	368
22.8.10 Cases related to copyright	370
22.8.11 Cases related to bank and financial institutions	370
22.8.12 Cases related to income tax	370
22.8.13 Complimentary tickets	370
22.9 What is not commercially confidential information?	371

CHAPTER 23 | INVOKING EXEMPTION UNDER SECTION 8(1)(e)

23.1 Section 8(1)(e)	374
23.2 Meaning of fiduciary	374
23.3 Fiduciary relationship as per Indian Contract Act	375
23.4 Examples of fiduciary relationship	377
23.5 Illustrative cases of fiduciary	379
23.5.1 Legal opinion	380
23.5.2 Medical cases	383
23.5.3 Statement of witness/persons	384
23.5.4 Official transactions	385
23.5.5 Data Submitted by Government employees	386
23.5.6 Relationship between the Chief Justice and Judges	387
23.5.7 Details of phone	388
23.5.8 Vigilance cases	388
23.5.9 Financial institutions	388

	PAGE
23.5.10	Income tax 389
23.5.11	Examinations 389
23.5.12	Service matters 389
23.5.13	Report of the expert committee 389
23.5.14	Charitable institution 390
23.5.15	President and Governor 391
23.5.16	Confirm or Deny 391

CHAPTER 24 | INVOKING EXEMPTION UNDER SECTION 8(1)(f)

24.1	Section 8(1)(f)	392
24.2	Meaning of terms	392
24.3	Who is competent to decide?	392
24.4	Clearance from the foreign Government	393
24.5	Illustrative cases	393

CHAPTER 25 | INVOKING EXEMPTION UNDER SECTION 8(1)(g)

25.1	Section 8(1)(g)	396
25.2	Meaning of terms	397
25.3	Disclosure of name	397
25.3.1	Names of officers or witness	397
25.3.2	Evidence of danger to a person	398
25.3.3	Whistle Blower's name not to be disclosed	398
25.3.4	Identity of the person already known	399
25.4	Claim for Exemption	399
25.4.1	Investigation completed	399
25.4.2	File notings	400
25.4.3	Discreet enquiries	400
25.4.4	Complaints and Reports thereon	401
25.4.5	Income tax assessment	402
25.4.6	Interview Board	402

	PAGE
25.5	Search and seizure 403
25.6	Police cases 404
25.6.1	Daily Diary 405
25.6.2	First Information Report (FIR) 407
25.6.3	Discarded report 408
25.6.4	Batla House encounter 408
25.6.5	Visitor's register 409
25.7	Statement of Witness 410
25.8	Illustrative examples 411

CHAPTER 26 | INVOKING EXEMPTION UNDER SECTION 8(1)(h)

26.1	Section 8(1)(h) 413
26.2	Meaning of investigation 413
26.3	Investigation in taxation matters 414
26.4	Prosecution and apprehension 415
26.5	Meaning of 'impede' 416
26.6	When is the 'process' complete? 418
26.7	Who decides whether disclosure impedes the process? 421
26.8	Illustrative cases of exemption 421
26.8.1	Quoting the proper section 422
26.8.2	Giving reasons 422
26.8.3	Pending investigation 423
26.8.4	Cases impeding the process 427
26.8.5	Information with Court 428
26.8.6	Charge sheet filed 429
26.8.7	Information needed for self defence 431
26.9	Information not affecting the process 431
26.10	Delayed investigation 435
26.11	Complaints 436
26.12	Vigilance cases 437
26.13	Informer 437
26.14	Witness 438

	PAGE
26.15 <i>De Novo</i> enquiry	439
26.16 Ongoing enquiry	439
26.17 Interconnected enquiry	439
26.18 First Information Report (FIR)	440

CHAPTER 27 | INVOKING EXEMPTION UNDER SECTION 8(1)(i)

27.1 Section 8(1)(i)	443
27.2 Meaning of terms	443
27.2.1 Cabinet	443
27.2.2 Council of Ministers	444
27.2.3 Cabinet papers	445
27.2.4 Cabinet note	445
27.2.5 Disclosure only after decision is complete	446
27.3 Is ACC included in cabinet?	447
27.4 Role of cabinet secretariat	448
27.5 Article 74 of the Constitution	449
27.6 Status of Disclosure of cabinet decision in India	451
27.7 Some illustrative cases	453
27.8 Potential papers	457

CHAPTER 28 | INVOKING EXEMPTION UNDER SECTION 8(1)(j)

28.1 Section 8(1)(j)	459
28.2 What is personal information?	459
28.2.1 Information about oneself	461
28.2.2 Information about corporations	462
28.2.3 Examples of public activity	463
28.2.4 Documents submitted to a public office	465
28.2.5 Information pertaining to the public authority	466
28.3 What is Privacy?	467

	PAGE
28.3.1	Importance of privacy 467
28.3.2	Invasion of privacy 468
28.3.3	Laws related to privacy 468
28.3.4	Legal position in India 469
28.3.5	Illustrative cases of privacy 473
28.3.6	Privacy of a dead individual 475
28.4	Other issues concerning privacy 477
28.4.1	Caste certificate 477
28.4.2	Registration certificate 477
28.4.3	Telephone 478
28.4.4	Passport 478
28.4.5	Donation and subsidy 479
28.4.6	Details related to spouse 479
28.4.7	EPF Contribution 482
28.4.8	Residential address 482
28.4.9	Muntakhab 483
28.4.10	In camera proceedings 484
28.4.11	Social media 485
28.4.12	Examinations 486
28.4.13	Financial institutions 486
28.4.14	Income tax 486
28.5	Government servant and privacy 487
28.5.1	Privacy of a Government servant 487
28.5.2	Assets of Public Servants/IPR 490
28.5.3	Vigilance cases 493
28.5.4	Personal information of a Government servant 494
28.5.5	Retired employees 496
28.5.6	Service particulars of colleagues for disputes relating to confirmation, seniority, promotion 496
28.6	Proviso to section 8(1)(j) 497
28.6.1	Information available to Parliament 497
28.6.2	Powers beyond that of the Parliament 499
28.6.3	Can private information be disclosed? 500

CHAPTER 29 | PUBLIC INTEREST

29.1	Section 8(2)	502
29.1.1	Comparison with section 8(1)	502
29.2	What is Public Interest?	502
29.2.1	View of the Supreme Court	504
29.2.2	Criticism of public interest	506
29.2.3	Public interest has to be claimed	506
29.2.4	Public interest should not be used as an Exemption clause	507
29.2.5	Does it obliterate Official Secrets Act?	507
29.2.6	Examples of public interest	508
29.3	Notice to third party	512
29.4	Dealing with public interest applications	513
29.5	Mere allegation is not enough	515
29.6	What is not 'public interest'?	516
29.7	Who decides whether 'public interest' is involved?	519
29.8	Processing of PIDPI complaints	521
29.9	Recording a finding of 'public interest'	523

CHAPTER 30 | INFORMATION OLDER THAN 20 YEARS

30.1	Section 8(3)	524
30.2	Maintaining records for 20 Years	524
30.3	Illustrative cases	526

CHAPTER 31 | INFRINGEMENT OF COPYRIGHT

31.1	Section 9	529
31.1.1	Section 13 of Copyright Act	529
31.1.2	Section 51 of the Copyright Act	530
31.2	Illustrative Examples	530

CHAPTER 32 | WORKING OF THE INFORMATION COMMISSION

32.1	Information Commission	534
32.1.1	Central Information Commission (CIC)	534
32.1.2	State Information Commission (SIC)	535
32.2	Powers of the Information Commission	536
32.2.1	Enquiry by information commission	544
32.2.2	Calling for documents	546
32.2.3	Illustrative examples of inquiry	547
32.2.4	Monitoring and reporting	547
32.2.5	Review of order by the commission	548
32.2.6	CIC (Management) Regulations, 2007	550
32.3	Jurisdiction of CIC	551
32.4	Delay in hearing of cases	555
32.5	Out of turn hearing	556
32.6	Difference of opinion between different benches	557
32.7	Framing of questions by the CIC	560
32.8	Effectiveness of CIC	560

CHAPTER 33 | FILING OF APPEAL AND COMPLAINT

33.1	Appeal to the first appellate authority	562
33.1.1	Procedure for filing the first appeal	563
33.1.2	Format for filing appeal to the first appellate Authority	563
33.1.3	Time limit for filing first appeal	564
33.1.4	Hearing by FAA	565
33.1.5	Disposal of the first appeal	565
33.1.6	Format of order by the FAA	566
33.2	Second appeal to the information commission	566
33.2.1	Process of second appeal	567
33.2.2	Filing of second appeal	568
33.2.3	The procedure for deciding appeals	568

	PAGE
33.2.4	Hearing before the information commission 569
33.2.5	Delay in filing second appeal 571
33.2.6	Single appeal against multiple applications 572
33.3	Review of own order by CIC 572
33.4	Options before the RTI Applicant 572
33.5	What is a Complaint? 573
33.5.1	Difference between a complaint and an appeal 574
33.5.2	Can a complaint be converted into an appeal? 576
33.6	Conduct of an enquiry 578
33.7	Finality of the order of the information commission 579
33.8	Judicial Review 580
33.9	Withdrawal of pending appeal 581

CHAPTER 34 | PENALTY UNDER THE ACT

34.1	What is penalty? 582
34.2	Need for penalty 582
34.3	Types of penalty 583
34.4	When can penalty be levied? 585
34.5	Should the complainant request for imposing penalty? 588
34.6	Interest on penalty 589
34.7	Procedure for levying penalty 589
34.8	How to avoid penalty proceedings? 592
34.9	On whom is the penalty levied? 592
34.10	Retired, transferred or deceased PIO 594
34.11	Nature and quantum of penalty 595
34.12	Examples of reasonable causes for delay 598
34.12.1	Non-receipt of application 600
34.12.2	Information not sought 600
34.12.3	Complex legal issue 600
34.12.4	PIO's Understanding of Law 601
34.12.5	Absence of <i>mala fide</i> intention 602
34.12.6	Compilation from multiple agencies 605
34.12.7	Establishing the identity of applicant 606

	PAGE	
34.12.8	Defective working of the system	606
34.12.9	Volume of work	607
34.12.10	Lack of staff	608
34.12.11	Voluminous information	609
34.12.12	Misplacing the application	610
34.12.13	Grievance settlement	611
34.12.14	Locating the place of information	611
34.12.15	Old records	611
34.12.16	Reply returned undelivered	612
34.12.17	Objective consideration by CIC	612
34.12.18	Information beyond the purview of RTI Act	613
34.12.19	Penalty after withdrawal of complaint	613
34.12.20	Stay against the order of CIC	613
34.12.21	Concealment of facts	614
34.13	Reasonable cause for non-supply of information	614
34.14	<i>Mala fide</i> denial of information	617
34.15	Orders directing improvement in the system	625
34.16	Improper transfer of application	626
34.17	Penalty on the first appellate authority	628
34.18	Penalty on the applicant	630
34.19	Participation of complainant in proceedings	631

CHAPTER 35 | CLAIM FOR COMPENSATION

35.1	What is Compensation?	633
35.2	Who can grant compensation?	633
35.3	When can compensation be claimed?	633
35.3.1	Improper maintenance of record	635
35.3.2	Calling for inspection on a holiday	636
35.3.3	Unnecessary transfer of application	636
35.3.4	Delay in supply of information	636
35.3.5	Overcharging	638
35.3.6	Harassment	638
35.4	Forms of compensation	640

	PAGE
35.5	Calculation of compensation 643
35.6	Rejection of claim for compensation 645
35.7	Vicarious liability 646
35.8	Directions to recover compensation from the PIO 647
35.9	Can public authority claim compensation? 648

CHAPTER 36 | RECOMMENDATIONS BY THE CIC

36.1	Section 25(5) 649
36.2	Are the recommendations binding? 649
36.3	Examples of some recommendations 650
36.4	Advice to public authority 655
36.5	Impact of the recommendations of CIC 656

CHAPTER 37 | MEDICAL CASES

37.1	Hospital related information 657
37.2	Personal information held in fiduciary capacity 658
37.3	Medical ethics 658
37.3.1	Hippocratic Oath 658
37.3.2	Indian Medical Council Regulations, 2002 658
37.3.3	National Medical Commission Regulations, 2023 661
37.4	Illustrative Cases 662
37.4.1	Medical opinion 662
37.4.2	Treatment 662
37.4.3	Medical reports 663
37.4.4	Records of third party 664
37.4.5	Medico-legal cases 667
37.4.6	Drug trial 669
37.4.7	Life and liberty 670
37.4.8	CGHS cases 670
37.4.9	Private hospitals 671
37.4.10	Improvement in system 672
37.4.11	Appointing alternative surgeon 674

CHAPTER 38 | EXAMINATION

38.1	Reasons for denial	675
38.2	Full Bench decision of CIC	675
38.2.1	Views of public authorities	676
38.2.2	Observations of the CIC	676
38.2.3	Decisions of judiciary	678
38.2.4	The verdict of Full Bench of CIC	679
38.3	Supreme Court judgment	681
38.4	Different aspects of an examination	684
38.4.1	Question papers	684
38.4.2	Answer sheets	685
38.4.3	Answer key	686
38.4.4	Marksheet	687
38.4.5	Details of candidates	688
38.4.6	System of examination	688
38.4.7	Departmental examination	689

CHAPTER 39 | BANKS AND OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS

39.1	Commonly claimed exemptions	690
39.2	Bank account details	691
39.2.1	Details of bank account of a customer	691
39.2.2	Account in the name of a group/public body/ society/trust	693
39.2.3	Account details of the deceased	694
39.2.4	Change of name of account operator	694
39.3	Loans	695
39.3.1	Details of loan	695
39.3.2	Concessional loan	696
39.3.3	Non-Performing Assets (NPA)	697
39.3.4	Waived loan	699
39.4	Terms and Conditions of policy	700

	PAGE
39.5 Dishonoured Cheque	700
39.6 Working of the financial institution	700
39.6.1 Policy and circulars	704
39.6.2 Distribution of coins	704
39.6.3 Investment pattern of funds	705
39.6.4 Stock exchange	705
39.6.5 ATM security	707

CHAPTER 40 | INCOME TAX

40.1 PAN and Income Tax Return	708
40.2 Assessment order	711
40.3 Tax Evasion complaints	712
40.4 Investigation in taxation matters	716
40.5 Search and survey	717
40.6 Refund	719
40.7 Informer	720
40.8 Charitable trust	721
40.9 Conflict with Income Tax Act	723
40.10 Public interest	724
40.11 Adjudication orders	726
40.12 Other cases	727

CHAPTER 41 | SERVICE MATTERS

41.1 Appointment	729
41.1.1 Creation or abolition of post	729
41.1.2 Recruitment	730
41.1.3 Compassionate appointment	731
41.1.4 Details of an employment seeker	732
41.1.5 Process of recruitment	733
41.1.6 Selection committee and panel	733
41.1.7 Appointment Committee of the Cabinet (ACC)	734
41.2 Promotion	736

	PAGE
41.2.1	Should the promotion proceedings be disclosed? 737
41.2.2	Departmental exams 737
41.2.3	Departmental Promotion Committees (DPC) 738
41.2.4	Sealed cover proceedings 740
41.2.5	Supersession 741
41.3	Transfer and Posting 742
41.4	Attendance 744
41.5	Leave 745
41.6	TA/Medical Bill 746
41.7	Arrears 747
41.8	Trade Union 748
41.9	Vigilance 748
41.9.1	Suspension 749
41.9.2	Termination 750
41.10	Retirement 751
41.11	Compulsory retirement under FR 56(j) of CCS (Pension) Rules 751
41.12	Pension 752

CHAPTER 42 | ACR/APAR

42.1	Past view 755
42.2	Dev Dutt case 756
42.3	Legal position today 757
42.4	Recent orders in favour of disclosure of APAR 759
42.5	APAR of third party 760
42.6	Comments on APAR of Third Party 761
42.7	Summary 762

CHAPTER 43 | VIGILANCE CASES

43.1	Vigilance Cases 763
43.1.1	Covered under - 'Investigation' u/s 8(1)(h) 763
43.1.2	Guidelines 764

	PAGE	
43.1.3	Vigilance enquiry is a public activity	765
43.1.4	Investigation in progress	765
43.1.5	Completion of vigilance process	765
43.1.6	Completed process	766
43.2	Role of Court	767
43.3	Opinion of the investigating agency	768
43.4	Disclosure of identity	768
43.4.1	Officers writing the notes	768
43.4.2	Officers under enquiry	770
43.4.3	Complainant or witness	773
43.5	Disclosure of documents	774
43.5.1	Investigation of third party	774
43.5.2	Confidential files	775
43.5.3	File notings in confidential files	776
43.5.4	Fate of complaint	778
43.5.5	Information in possession of consultant	778
43.5.6	Information needed to defend oneself	778
43.6	Illustrative cases where disclosure was denied	780
43.7	Illustrative cases where disclosure was ordered	783
43.8	Public Interest	786
43.9	Strictures/advice to vigilance department	786

CHAPTER 44 | EXPANDING SCOPE OF THE ACT

44.1	Directions to do something	788
44.2	Directions to create information	790
44.3	Directions to providing reasons or explanations	791
44.4	Directions to provide clarification	792
44.5	Compilation of information	792
44.6	Providing fresh information	793
44.7	Strictures against the public authority	794
44.8	Directions to explore facilities	794

CHAPTER 45 | CONDUCT OF AN APPLICANT

45.1	Responsibilities of an applicant	796
45.2	Hearing before the information commission	797
45.3	Change of appellant	798
45.4	Status of application on the death of the applicant	798
45.5	Can the contents of application be disclosed?	798
45.6	Harassment of an applicant	799
45.7	Protection to an applicant	801

CHAPTER 46 | MISUSE OF THE ACT

46.1	Introduction	803
46.2	Objectives of Misuse	804
46.3	Ways of Misuse	806
46.3.1	Use of abusive language	806
46.3.2	Pseudonymous applications	807
46.3.3	Repeated applications on a single issue	807
46.3.4	Queries based on earlier RTI application	808
46.3.5	Applications seeking voluminous information	809
46.3.6	Applications seeking old and complex information	809
46.3.7	Misleading the commission	810
46.3.8	False claims of public interest or life and liberty	810
46.3.9	Misuse of BPL status	811
46.3.10	Blackmail	811
46.3.11	Vexatious litigation	812
46.3.12	Repeated submissions	813
46.3.13	Refusing inspection	813
46.4	Employees using the RTI route in vigilance enquiry	814
46.5	Impact of misuse	816
46.6	Are there any solutions?	817

	PAGE
46.7 Steps that can be taken by the public authority	822
46.8 Think about it	823

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 : RIGHT TO INFORMATION ACT, 2005	<i>827</i>
APPENDIX 2 : RIGHT TO INFORMATION RULES, 2012	<i>856</i>
SUBJECT INDEX	<i>861</i>