

Minutes of the Meeting held on 21-08-09 at 3 P.M. in the Conference Hall of I & P.R. Department under the chairmanship of the Commissioner –cum-Secretary on review of RTI implementation. The Hon'ble Orissa Information Commissioner Sri Jagadananda graced the occasion as guest of honour.

1. Initiating the discussion the Commissioner-cum-Secretary of Information and Public Relations Department gave stress on the effective Implementation of the RTI Act -05 in the State and compliance of the provisions under section 4(1) (b) of the RTI Act-05 both in English and in Oriya. A Xerox copy of the of the Information solicited by Sri Kedarnath Sahu putting emphasis for disclosure of 17 points of the format under section 4(1) (b) of the Act in Oriya and for providing the information in Oriya was distributed among the participating nodal Officers asking them to give their views and consent on the questions raised by him and all of them were requested to take strategic initiative in this regard.

Action: By nodal officers of All Government Departments.

2. The Hon'ble Information Commissioner highlighted the facts and importance for submission of the Annual Reports for the year 2008-09 by All the Public Authorities. Out of the six defaulting Departments, the nodal officers of Higher Education Department, Revenue Department, Rural Development Department and PanchayatRaj Department were categorically asked to furnish the ANNUAL Reports for the year 2008-09 within a fortnight or at best within a time period of one month by which the commission will be able to include the name of their Departments for laying the Annual Report under section 25 of the RTI Act in the Orissa Legislative Assembly. The Hon'ble Orissa Information Commission also accentuated the significance for submission of Annual Reports by the Departments who have not submitted the same earlier for previous years commencing from the year of its inception of the RTI Act-05 i.e. from 2005-06 till date.

Action: Nodal Officers of All Departments.

3. A power point presentation was given by the M/S Luminous Info Ways, Jayadev vihar, Bhubaneswar on 'e' filing of records on computerization of all records of Proactive disclosure of 17 points format under section 4(1) (b) of the RTI Act, for which the cost of 11,000/- (Rupees eleven thousand) only is to be paid to M/S Luminous Info ways by the interested Departments who desires to execute the same through Info Ways for preparation of C.D and other related computerization of materials . It is the Departments can participate in the Central Monitoring Mechanism relating to their Departments through Info ways directly.

Action: By All Departments.

4. Priority was also given for Voluntary disclosure of 4(1) (c) of the RTI Act-05 both in English and in Oriya as some Applicants are putting stress for the same before the Orissa Information Commission as well as to the Nodal Department on the above matter. Though a considerable time has elapsed, yet many of the Departments have not published the relevant facts while formulating important policies or announcing the decisions which affect the Public.

All the Departments are requested to give prime concern on it for displaying of the same in their respective Websites.

Action: By Nodal Officers of All Departments.

5. All the nodal Officers were asked to communicate the name of their Departmental Training Institutes and locations so as to enable the Commission as well as the Nodal Department to move a step forward for imparting Training to the Officers & Employees of Subordinate Offices starting from Panchayat level to the Collectorate of each District and to that of Heads of Departments and Government Departments. A line of confirmation in this regard providing the address and location of the Training Institutions may be communicated to the Orissa Information Commission and to the nodal Department for enabling them in their onward march for effective Implementation of the RTI Act in the State.

Action: By Nodal Officers of All Departments.

6. Both the Hon'ble Information Commissioner and the Commissioner – cum –Secretary, I& P. R Department advocated for use of computer and Internet by all The PIOS for computerization of all Records as well as to participate in Central Monitoring Mechanism. A display on the monitor by M/S Luminous Info ways was supplemented to prop up the deliberation and use of computer and internet by Pios of All the Government Departments.

Action: By All Departments.

7. In order to keep a watch on the voluntary disclosure of the information under section 4(1) (b) of the RTI Act -05, a surveillance was conducted vigorously by the Hon'ble Information Commissioner and the Commissioner-cum-Secretary I& P. R Department jointly regarding the action taken by each Department on the proceedings of the meeting held on RTI on 15-05-09. An optimistic and convincing response by the nodal officers delighted the Hon'ble Information Commissioner. He rather exhorted to all nodal officers present in the meeting to accelerate the process of their endeavour for voluntary disclosure of the section 4(1) (b) of the Act in the Public Interest. He also advised to issue necessary guidelines and instructions immediately to the subordinate offices working under the Administrative Control of each Department under the signature of Principal Secretary/ Commissioner cum-Secretary as Public Authority for ensuring the voluntary disclosure of information under section 4(1) (b) and 4(1) (c) of the Act both in English as well as in Oriya.

Action: By all Departments.

8. Some useful measures were suggested by the nodal officers while putting forth their grievances before the Hon'ble Information Commissioner for dealing with RTI cases. A guideline is requested to be issued in this regard declaring all the Branch Officers as PIOs in order to handle the expanding number of RTI Applications, to tackle the situation and to meet the need of the hour for supplying Information to the information seekers. A senior officer in the rank of Addl Secretary / Joint Secretary may be declared as nodal officer who is remaining in charge of administration for smooth transaction of the RTI cases. All the concerned quarters are to remain vigilant in this connection. The Hon'ble Information Commissioner agreed to the proposal of nodal officers and consented to issue a guideline on that score. Awareness programme and Training Programme may be launched to provide proper training to the officers starting from the level of ASO to Addl. secretaries equipping all of them with books and operational guidelines.

Action: Orissa Information Commission and the Nodal Department.

9. A notable point was raised by Sri Gangadhar Singh the Nodal Officer of Higher Education Department. He asserted that 800 PIOs are working under the Higher Education Department and it is quite cumbersome and difficult to interact with all of them for collection and preparation of Annual Report which is mandatory under section 25 of the RTI Act. The Hon'ble Information Commissioner advised to declare all the vice Chancellors of the Universities as 1st Appellate Authorities to whom all the PIOs are responsible for submission of Annual Reports and to dispose of the RTI Cases.

Action: By Higher Education Department.

An inspiring and heart warming speech was delivered by the PIO of the Nodal Department requesting all the Departments to stretch their hands and moral support for strengthening the process of implementation of the Act.

The meeting ended with a vote of thanks to the chair.

(R.N Dash)

Commissioner-Cum-Secretary,
I & P.R. Department.

Government of Orissa

Information & Public Relations Department

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Copy forwarded to All the Government Departments/All Collectors/
All RDC's / The Secretary, Orissa Information Commission for information
& necessary action.

PIO and DD-cum-DS