

PUNJAB STATE INFORMATION COMMISSION
RED CROSS BUILDING, NEAR ROSE GARDEN,
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Shri Amarjit Singh Dhamotia,
NCAG office,
Street Number 05, # 1331-5, Vishvkarma Bhawan,
Down Canal Road, Simlapuri, Ludhiana.

.....Appellant

Versus

Public Information Officer

O/o Principal Secretary,
Local Bodies Department, Punjab
Sector35-A, Chandigarh.

First Appellate Authority

O/o Principal Secretary,
Local Bodies Department, Punjab
Sector35-A, Chandigarh.

....Respondents

AC No. 3347 of 2022

Present: (i) **Shri Amarjit Singh Dhamotia, the Appellant along with his representative Shri Gurmej Lal is present through webex.**
(ii) **Shri Rajeev Kumar, Building Inspector is present from the office of Resp./ PIO, in person.**

ORDER

1. The RTI application is dated 19.04.2022 vide which the appellant has sought information as enumerated in his RTI application. First appeal was filed with the First Appellate Authority (hereinafter FAA) on 21.05.2022 and the second appeal was filed in the Commission on 18.07.2022 under Section 19 of the Right to Information Act, 2005 (hereinafter RTI Act).
2. The case has been heard today in the Commission's office at Chandigarh. The representative of the Appellant, Shri Gurmej Lal states that no information has been supplied yet and the notice of hearing has not been received by the appellant in this case.
3. On the asking of this Bench, Shri Rajeev Kumar, Building Inspector states that the **information relates with multiple PIO's of office of MC, Ludhiana Zone A, B, C and D of the departments and the RTI application has been transferred under section 6(3) to the concerned PIO and the same has been explained in the letter dated 13.05.2022,** which is taken on record.
4. After hearing the version of the appellant and the representatives of PIO, the Bench observes that the information sought by the appellant relates to number of PIOs i.e. MC, Ludhiana. The Bench also observes from the version of the representative of PIO that the information sought by the appellant relates to such issues which entail collection, collating and compilation of information as a number of PIOs are involved.
5. The Bench, as per observations made above, is of the view that the appellant cannot seek information in single RTI application from multiple public authorities. A Full Bench of State Information Commission, Punjab has in Complaint Case No.2903 of 2011 decided on 13.01.2012, ruled as under:-



"We hold that under Section (3) of the Act *ibid*, the legal obligation of a PIO who receives a request for information under Section 6(1) of the Act is limited to transfer this request to only one public authority that hold the information. This obligation does not extend to transfer the request to multiple authorities.

6. The Bench further observes that the PIO O/o Principal Secretary, Local Bodies Department Punjab, Chandigarh has made efforts to supply information to the appellant by forwarding RTI application to different PIOs of MC, Ludhiana (Zone- A, B, C and D) but the information asked for by the appellant entails collection, collating and compilation, thereby resulting in wastage of time of multiple PIOs involved. The Hon'ble Supreme Court in matter of CBSE vs. Aditya Bandopadhyay, (2011) 8 SCC 497, held as under:-

"67. Indiscriminate and impractical demands or directions under the RTI Act for disclosure of all and sundry information (unrelated to transparency and accountability in the functioning of public authorities and eradication of corruption) would be counterproductive as it will adversely affect the efficiency of the administration and result in the executive getting bogged down with the non-productive work of collecting and furnishing information. The Act should not be allowed to be misused or abused, to become a tool to obstruct the national development and integration, or to destroy the peace, tranquility and harmony among its citizens. Nor should it be converted into a tool of oppression or intimidation of honest officials striving to do their duty. The nation does not want a scenario where 75% of the staff of public authorities spends 75% of their time in collecting and furnishing information to applicants instead of discharging their regular duties. The threat of penalties under the RTI Act and the pressure to the authorities under the RTI Act should not lead employees of a public authorities prioritizing "information furnishing", at the cost of their normal and regular duties.

7. In view of the above, it does not seem to be appropriate for the appellant to seek information which may entail engaging 75% of the employees of a public authority to collect and compile the information for furnishing the same to the appellant. The Bench advises the appellant to go for seeking information by filing separate RTI application before a specific public authority who has its separate PIO.

8. In view of the aforesaid observations, **the instant appeal case is disposed off and closed.** Copy of the order be sent to the parties.

Chandigarh
01.09.2022

Sd/-
(Lt Gen Ajae Kumar Sharma (Retd))
State Information Commissioner, Punjab