



- (v) All local bodies in rural areas such as Gram Panchayats, Kshetra Panchayats and Zilla Panchayats
- (vi) All such NGOs which are substantially financed directly or indirectly by the State Government.

3. Orders have been issued earlier requiring officers and employees of all public authorities to be apprised with a complete understanding of this Act. It has also been stated that they be provided with necessary materials about this Act and meetings and workshop be organized in order to explain the scope of the Act. This action may be undertaken at all levels within public authorities located in all Departments. Materials related to this Act have been made available at the workshop organized on 23-24 July, 2005. Copies of the relevant material may please be made available to all public authorities.

4. All public authorities mentioned in para 2 above will be required to designate officers under the following 3 grades –

- (a) Public Information Officer (PIO) – Sec. 5
- (b) Assistant Public Information Officer – Sec. 5
- (c) Departmental Appellate Authority – first appeal – Sec. 19

The following guidelines may be observed while designating these officers:-

- (i) It is the responsibility of the PIO to provide information within 30 days to a person making the request. Therefore this officer has the greatest level of importance under the *RTI Act*. While designating a PIO it may be borne in mind that such officers be designated who, to a large extent, will be able to provide the requested information at their level itself so that the need for obtaining the requested information from any other office is reduced as much as possible.
- (ii) In every public authority as many PIOs may be designated as may be required.
- (iii) Every Department may appoint as many PIOs as may be required keeping in mind, its dimensions, activities, number of offices, nature of work and the information needs of common people. PIOs may be appointed at the level of the government, the head office, the Mandal, the district, the sub-division and the Block as per the requirement.
- (iv) As far as possible PIOs should be officers who are not required to undertake a lot of field visits as part of their main responsibilities.
- (v) As far as possible PIOs may be Heads of their offices so that they are capable of providing information which is under the control of their office to the common people easily.
- (vi) There is a provision in this Act for the designation of Assistant PIOs also. According to the Act if an Asst. PIO receives an information request from an individual he is required to dispatch the request to the concerned PIO within a maximum of 5 days. A subordinate officer or employee below every PIO is required to be designated Assistant PIO. Every Department may according to its requirement designate Assistant PIOs at the level of the village, the Nyaya Panchayat, the Block and the Sub-division. The objective (of appointing an Assistant PIO) being – if the PIO is unable to contact the common people in far off places then information may be made available to them through the Assistant PIO who is situated closest to them.

- (vii) Every public authority is required to designate a Departmental Appellate Authority (DAA) who will be senior in rank to the PIO. In order to provide easy access to the common people, the DAA may as far as possible be appointed at the same place as that of the PIO.
- (viii) PIOs, Assistant PIOs and Appellate Authorities may be designated in all NGOs which have been identified as public authorities.
- (ix) The convenience of the common people must be borne in mind while deciding upon the numbers and levels of designation of PIOs and Assistant PIOs. It should also be ensured that agents and middle men are not allowed to flourish.

5. According to the *RTI Act, 2005* all local bodies in urban and rural areas are public authorities. Therefore PIOs, Assistant PIOs and Departmental Appellate Authorities will be required to be appointed in every Nagar Panchayat, Municipality and Municipal Corporation in urban areas and in every Gram Panchayat, Kshetra Panchayat and Zilla Panchayat in rural areas. Every such body will have to prepare a manual of information related to the 16 points mentioned in Sec. 4 of the *RTI Act*.

6. At the State level workshop organised on July 23-24 2005, the matter relating to the appointment of the Gram Pradhan as the PIO for the Gram Panchayat was discussed. As all records of the Gram Panchayat are usually available with the Pradhan and as there is a dearth of Village Panchayat Development Officers in the region it has been found appropriate to designate the Pradhan as the PIO in every Gram Panchayat. The Secretary, Panchayati Raj will examine and discuss this matter and will undertake action immediately and will undertake to make amendments to the Panchayati Raj Act if necessary.

7. A majority of the Departments have already carried out the tasks of designating the PIO, the Asst. PIO and the Departmental Appellate Authority. This may be reviewed in the light of the guiding principles given above in para 4 and information about the same in all respects may be provided in the attached proforma before August 5, 2005. (Annexure 1)

8. Under Sec. 4 of the *RTI Act*, every public authority is required to disclose information voluntarily on 16 points. The following points may be borne in mind in relation to 'proactive disclosure' of information –

- (i) Every public authority will be required to prepare 16 information related manuals.
- (ii) These manuals will have to be prepared for the following levels (of operation) keeping in mind the dimensions, activities, nature of work and the information needs of the common people in each Department –
  - a) Government level
  - b) Directorate level
  - c) Mandal level
  - d) District level

Flexibility may be observed while preparing the contents of the manual. The contents of manuals prepared for different levels are themselves likely to be varied. Some contents may be similar to manuals at all levels. Some contents may be available in the manual prepared at the district level which may not be available in the manual prepared at the level of Government or the Head Office.

While designing the contents of these manuals at different levels the probable information needs of the common people at those levels should be kept in mind.

- (iii) The main objective of Sec. 4 is that all public authorities proactively publish to the maximum extent such information that will be of interest to the common people so that the need for requesting information under this Act becomes minimal. This basic principle may be borne in mind while preparing the manual.
- (iv) As the main objective of proactive disclosure is to provide information to the common people voluntarily, every public authority may conduct an extensive study and analysis of the kinds of information that common people ordinarily seek by approaching their office.
- (v) With a view to providing information to the common people easily, categories of information other than the 16 points mentioned in Sec. 4 of the Act may be included in this manual so as to bring down to a minimum their need for seeking information through applications.
- (vi) The Accounts and Entitlements Directorate of the Government has prepared a manual on these 16 points. This manual has been appreciated by experts in the State level workshop on the *RTI Act* 2005 that was organized on July 23 & 24, 2005. A copy of this manual has been already made available to you. All Departments may use this document (as a guide) while preparing their own manuals.
- (vii) A template has been prepared for these manuals pursuant to discussions held by Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) with Principal Secretaries and Secretaries of some Departments. This has also been provided to you by now. If it is not possible to develop a common format for all public authorities, this template may be used by them while preparing their manuals. Modifications and amendments to the template may be incorporated if necessary.
- (viii) These manuals will require to be updated at regular intervals. A system regarding timelines for updating each category of information will be designed while formulating the rules under this Act.
- (ix) The information contained in these manuals will be required to be made accessible to common people through the medium of books, notice boards, Departmental libraries and the Internet and also made available for inspection in offices. Every Department will decide as to which information should be made available in which medium at which level (of operation) after taking into consideration the available resources, the nature of information concerned and the convenience of the common people.

**9.** The task of preparing these manuals is in progress and public authorities in some departments have completed the preparation of all or at least some of the manuals. These manuals which are under preparation may be reviewed and revised in light of the points mentioned in para 8 above.

**10.** It is necessary to organise one day workshops on the *RTI Act*, 2005 in every district immediately. The Uttaranchal Administrative Academy, Nainital will organize workshops in all Janpads between the 10<sup>th</sup> and the 20<sup>th</sup> of August. The Academy will contact all District Magistrates immediately to prepare the programme for these workshops.

It is necessary to provide training to PIOs and Departmental Appellate Authorities for implementing the *RTI Act*. For this purpose the Uttaranchal Administrative Academy, Nainital will

prepare a programme for providing the initial training for 100 Master Trainers. This two day training programme will be held in Dehradun and Nainital between 20-25 August.

Through these Master Trainers 2-day training programmes for all PIOs and Departmental Appellate Authorities will be organized in every district. These training programmes will be organized by the District Magistrates between 1-20 September 2005 under the supervision of the Administrative Academy, Nainital.

The Administrative Academy Nainital will seek the assistance of external institutions like Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative, New Delhi, YASHADA Pune and other organisations while organizing these training programmes.

**11.** A separate training programme will be organized for Gram Pradhans by the Secretary, Panchayat (Department) in collaboration with other voluntary organisations. This training programme shall be completed between September 1-30, 2005.

**12.** The following tasks also need to be undertaken in order to prepare for the implementation of the *RTI Act*-

- (i) Constitution of the Information Commission.
- (ii) Issue of notification exempting security and Intelligence agencies from the purview of this Act.
- (iii) Framing of rules under this Act.
- (iv) Preparing a 'Practical Guide Manual' about this Act in simple language for the educating the common people and for the convenience of administrative offices.

The above tasks will be completed by the Department of Information in coordination with the concerned departments.

**13.** A time-table for making preparations to implement this Act has already been drawn up and dispatched. The revised time-table related to the guidelines given in this Government Order has been attached (Annexure – 2). Further action may please be taken in accordance with this time-table.

**14.** Action may be taken in a diligent and timely manner on all the points mentioned in this GO.

Annexures as mentioned above.

Yours truly,

**(M Ramachandran)**  
Chief Secretary

By Order

**(DK Kotia)**  
Secretary, Information