

## **Empowering Citizens with Online RTI Portal**

**(Article by Shri. Prakash S. Naik, Information Officer)**

The commencement of the RTI regime more than 19 years ago has helped the government in inculcating a culture of transparency and accountability in the working of public authorities.

In fact, the enactment of the Right to Information Act 2005 is a powerful tool to the citizens to get information from the Government as a matter of right. Also it is a big step towards making the citizens informed about the activities of the Government. The basic objective of RTI is to empower the citizens, promote transparency and accountability in the working of the Government, contain corruption and make our democracy work for the people in real sense. Now, more than 19 years have passed for the enactment of Right to Information Act 2005 after it was passed by the parliament and assented to by the President of India on [June 15, 2005](#).

The Department of Information and Publicity which effectively propagate policies and programmes of the State Government act as a Nodal Agency for RTI Act 2005. The Department also functions as administrative Department for (GSIC) for its smooth and effective functioning. It endeavours to see that the RTI Act is implemented effectively and in right perspective to provide good, prompt and transparent governance to the people.

The Department initiates steps to ensure that the GSIC which is a statutory body is equipped with all the adequate facilities including making necessary budgetary provision for providing grant-in-aid to the commission to meet its requirement of salaries of staff members and other day to day expenses. It also brings out guides under the Act from time to time as a source of information to the public authorities and for the information seekers.

GSIC consist of (SCIC) and (SIC). Till now, five SCIC's namely A. Venkatratnam, Motilal Keny, Leena Mehendale, Prashant Tendolkar and Vishwas Satarkar and six SIC's beginning from G.G.Kambli, Afonso Araujo, Pradeep Padwal, Pratima Vernekar, Juino D,souza and Sanjay Dhavalikar have served in GSIC before demitting office upon completion of their term of Office. The commissioners after assuming charge dispose appeals and complaints filed by the appellant and complainant.

The Department of Information and Publicity conducts workshops on RTI Act for Public Information Officer, elected representatives of local self Government bodies, consumer and social clubs among others to enlighten them on RTI Act and how to make it more effective to promote transparency in the affairs of administration.

Apart from this in a bid to provide adequate knowledge about the functioning and operation of RTI online portal the department conducted training programme for all the PIOs, Assistant Public Information Officer and Nodal Officers of the Government Departments, Autonomous Bodies and Corporations. This online portal ([www.rtionline.goa.gov.in](http://www.rtionline.goa.gov.in)) launched by the Department facilitated citizens for online filling of RTI applications, First appeals and also online payment of RTI fees.

The training was conducted by National Informatics Centre Goa and as many as 1200 officers including PIO's, APIO's and Nodal Officers participated in the 3 days training programme. The training was conducted in six Batches and evoked overwhelming response.

Undoubtedly, the RTI online portal launched following the direction from the Hon'ble Supreme Court will save time and energy of those willing to seek Information under RTI Act without visiting public offices.

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