

If you have any queries or comments regarding the Freedom of Information Ordinance 2002,

Contact



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WHY

Can't You Exercise

Your

Right to

Information?



CONSUMER RIGHTS COMMISSION OF PAKISTAN



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las yet to meet certain requirements before j,e Ordinance could become functional.

Considerable time has passed since October 2002, when the Ordinance was promulgated, but none of the measures necessary to implement the Ordinance has been taken. To ensure that citizens of Pakistan are able to exercise their right to information, the Government must immediately implement the following:

• Formulation of rules of business and notification in the official gazette;

• Designation of officials in various Federal ministries, departments and public bodies to deal with information requests;

• Indexing and computerization of records;

• Staff training on how best to maintain records and provide information to requesters; and

• Initiatives for public awareness so that people know how to use the law and access information.

When the Ordinance is implemented, you will be able to obtain a lot of information, which is currently treated as confidential but can be very useful for you to access public services on an equitable basis. For instance, such information may include:

1. How much money is WAPDA spending on rural electrification in your district as

compared to other districts?

2. What is the amount of revenues raised from your district/tehsil by the Federal

Government and how much of it is spent in your district/tehsil for provision of services and development projects?

3. How much money has the Federal Government allocated for relief work in a flood affected area and how has it been spent?

4. What are the terms and conditions of various agreements signed and contracts awarded by a particular public body? Or, what procedures were followed in the

... signing of agreements or the awarding of contracts?

5. How many housing plots were allotted by different departments and related public bodies of the Federal government, to whom and what procedures were followed for such purposes?

6. How many permits and licenses for various benefits or privileges were issued by a public body, to whom and under what rules and regulations?

7. This will enable you to find out whether your sector was discriminated against and, if so, on what grounds. This will also allow you to monitor claims by public bodies that they actually implemented projects and whether they abided by the rules.

Yes, of course. By exercising the right to freedom of information, you may:

• Be aware of the policies, actions, and decisions that affect you. For instance,

whether the annual allocation of funds to the hospital in your neighborhood has been decreased and, if so, on what grounds, and which services will be affected?

. Be able to debate and respond to

government policies and decisions, and

constructively influence the political process. For instance, you can access information about the privatization plan of a water utility, analyze how it will affect you and your community, and then find ways to influence the relevant policy or decision.

. Be sure that you do not suffer due to lack of

information about your rights and responsibilities. For instance, you can ask for copies of agreements between a public body and private service providers so that you could know whether your rights as consumers or citizens are protected. ~

. Ensure that your personal information is not disclosed to a third person. For instance, you can contest a request whereby a member of the public wants to access your personal information or private documents furnished to a public body on the condition that they will not be disclosed to a third person.

. Be confident that a designated official in

each public body is obligated to handle

your request for information. For instance,

that you will have to do is to make a request for information on a prescribed form and pay a certain fee. "

. Be able to obtain authenticated information to undertake research on:

inform your work and choices vis-à-vis

government policies.

- Reduce your dependence on informal channels of obtaining information, as it may or may not be accurate or authentic. It should be pointed out that information obtained through informal channels is not always useful for initiating legal actions.

How Can You Contribute to Have the Ordinance Implemented?

- Demand its implementation through whatever forums are available to you. For instance, through lectures, talks, seminars and workshops.
- Use print and electronic media by participating in talk shows, and by writing articles and letters to editors in various newspapers.
- Keep yourself informed about relevant developments. For this, you should contact relevant federal ministries as well as your elected representatives.
- You may also write to CRCP and CCE for information at the addresses given in this brochure.
- Create awareness about the Freedom of Information Ordinance, 2002 by sharing it with your relatives, friends, colleagues and all those you regularly interact with.
- Write a letter or e-mail or send a fax to your member of Parliament as well as to the following authorities:

The President
 Islamic Republic of Pakistan
 President's Secretariat
 Awan-e-Sadar, Islamabad.
 Ph: 051-9206060-69, Fax: 051-9224836

The Prime Minister
 Islamic Republic of Pakistan
 Prime Minister's Secretariat, Islamabad.
 Ph: 051-9206907, Fax: 051-9226665

Federal Minister for Information and Media Development
 4th Floor, Cabinet Block, Islamabad
 Ph: 051-9213649, 051-9204385
 Fax: 051-9203740
 E-mail: infominister@infopak.gov.pk

Federal Minister for Law, Justice and Human Rights
 S Block, Third Floor, Pak. Secretariat, Islamabad
 Ph: 051-9210335, Fax: 051-9206954

Secretary Cabinet Division
 Cabinet Secretariat
 Islamabad
 Tel: 051-9213562, 051-9201357
 Fax: 051-9207930
 E-mail: cabdiv@isb.paknet.com.pk

Secretary Ministry of Law, Justice and Human Rights
 S Block, Third Floor, Pak. Secretariat, Islamabad
 Ph: 051-9202719, Fax: 051-9202628

Secretary Ministry of Information and Media Development
 4th Floor, Cabinet Block, Islamabad
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