

Press Release

Workshop on 'Implementation of RTI Act in A&N Islands' held

RTI functionaries urged to remain pro-active in sharing information with citizen; to upload information in RTI website

Port Blair, Mar. 28: A workshop on 'Implementation of RTI Act in Andaman & Nicobar Islands-Issues and Challenges' was held in the auditorium of Tagore Government College of Education (TGCE) here today. The Information Commissioner, Central Information Commission (CIC), New Delhi, Shri Divya Prakash Sinha inaugurated the workshop as the chief guest. The Chief Secretary, A&N Administration, Shri Anindo Majumdar and the DGP, Ms. Nuzhat Hassan were also present on the occasion. The workshop was organized by the Administrative Reform & Training (AR&T) wing of the Secretariat.

Delivering his keynote address, the chief guest dwelt at length about RTI Act and the various articles provided therein. He said that transparency and accountability are two of the pillars of a vibrant democracy as it empowers the common man to acquire information on the developmental activities of the Government. Under the Act, people seek information on execution and implementation of Government projects, in which public money is involved and they need to be replied within the timeframe, he said. The very purpose of enacting the RTI Act was to provide a tool to the ordinary citizen for getting information from the executing agency. This makes the Administrative system clean and wrong free to a great extent, he said.

The Information Commissioner gave details of the preamble of the Act and said that information sought by citizen may be in conflict with the Govt. functioning and therefore certain articles of the Act provide exemption in sharing information on matters that may have adverse impact on national interest. Articles 8, 9, 10 and 11 provide right to privacy of matters that cannot be shared with the citizen, he said and appealed to the RTI functionaries to upload information, whatever can be disclosed, in the RTI website so that all can have access to those information. He also advised them to go through the Act thoroughly and apprise themselves of the various provisions so as to enable them discharge their duty and responsibility relating to the Act.

Speaking on the occasion, the Chief Secretary urged the PIOs and APIOs to remain pro-active in sharing information with the citizen. Citizen should be served first and the way of administrative functioning should not be hidden to them, he said. "To run an efficient, clean and transparent Administration, we need to give priority in providing any

information sought by the citizen”, he said. This will enforce certain corrective measures in the way of our functioning; he said adding that efficient, clean and transparent Administration is a good sign of vibrant democracy.

In her welcome address, the Secretary (AR&Trng.), Smt. Rashmi Singh informed that implementing the RTI Act is a great challenge for the Administration. “The most important factor about RTI Act is that the Act builds a dialogue between citizen and the Government and we are expected to be instrumental in sharing all kinds of information required by the citizen. Our service is to implement the Government schemes for the welfare of the citizen and they need to know the progress and expenditure involved in those projects”, she said adding that RTI Act is the great instrument for the citizen to acquire information.

Later, an open house discussion was held, in which the RTI Act functionaries raised certain doubts on the implementation of the Act, which were accordingly clarified on the spot by the Information Commissioner.

As many as 259 RTI functionaries, besides Secretaries and HoDs of the different Departments of the Administration participated in the workshop, which concluded with the vote of thanks, proposed by Shri Navalendra Singh, Director of State Transport Services.

