



India Institute of Secretariat Training & Development

G/F WB-159 Old Plot No.-53-A, WB Block, Ganesh Nagar-2, Shakarpur, East Delhi, New Delhi-110092

Phone: 011 22941056 & 22941014, Mobile: 9891987306

trg@iistd.in; training@iistd.in Website: <https://iistd.in>

Indian Association for the Cultivation of Science (IACS)

Summary Report of Third Party Audit on RTI Act, 2005 for 2022-23

The Indian Association for the Cultivation of Science (IACS) is a society registered under Act XXI of 1860 and the corresponding State Act viz. the West Bengal State Registration Act 1961. It has a Governing Council with a number of members elected or nominated and the Registrar as its Non-Member Secretary. The Council has the functions, duties and power as envisaged in the Memorandum and Bye Laws and as per the provisions of the relevant Act. The IACS is a deemed to be University under de novo category under section 3 of the UGC, Act, 1956.

It is observed that the Public Information Officer (PIO) of the IACS, as placed on the home page of the Public Authority (PA) at <http://www.iacs.res.in/maincontroller.php?navid=25&subnavid=86>, is in contradistinction with the details as presented in the RTI disclosure at <http://www.iacs.res.in/modules/texteditor/imagesfiles/RTI%20Disclosure.pdf> (Refer page 2, and 118 of the said document). The home page suggests an UDC of the PA being their PIO, whereas, the RTI disclosure at page 2 suggests an Assistant being their Central PIO. Further, the details of PIO, as presented in at page 118 of the same document, mentions his being an Assistant followed by an UDC-1 as the Assistant PIO. It appears that the PA has used the Central PIO, PIO, APIO apparently interchangeably, which may potentially confuse the stakeholders. The stakeholders may not know the hierarchy of the PIOs in the PA viz. UDC, Assistant, and UDC-1, consequently, may unnecessarily invite perceived non-compliance in the RTI regime. Besides, in so far as the appropriateness of designating PIOs in a PA is concerned, it is observed that their designation is lower in the hierarchical structure of the PA. In terms of the recommendations of the Central Information Commission (CIC) u/s 25 (5) of the RTI Act to the appropriate Government, the PIOs shouldn't be below the rank of an Under Secretary. The PA may accordingly like to relook into nominating the RTI regimen for ensuring compliance.

The RTI disclosure of the PA is quite exhaustive and adequately covers most of the

compliance aspects of the section 4 (1) (b) of the RTI Act, except of placing them all 17 manuals in a single document instead of placing them separately under specific heads. Besides, the PA have disclosed the pay scales of the posts and not the total emoluments of the employees, which is the disclosure requirement under the Act.

In respect of the disclosure in Chapter 7 of the document, it is observed that the documents held by the PA is only about the establishment whereas, a PA holds several documents viz. Budget document, Proceedings of the Committees, Constitutions of various Committees to name a few.

PA's disclosure in Chapter 8 of the RTI disclosure suggests that there is no occasion for consultation with or representation by the members of the public in relation to the affair of the Institute. This is a bit intriguing for the reasons that the cultivation of the science without the consultation processes, may have quite a limited outcome. The PA may like to relook this disclosure.

All in all PA has done a commendable job for placing the disclosure of information under the RTI Act, 2005 in the public domain, except for the manner as observed herein above.

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