



Modern technology initiatives by Punjab state information commission

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RTI Commission Launched SMS facility for appellants/ complainants and PIO's/ FAA's

CHANDIGARH: The Punjab State Information Commission (PSIC) has launched a Short Messaging Service (SMS) facility for the benefit of the appellants/ complainants and PIO's/ FAA's of the Govt. of Punjab. This facility is being provided with the assistance of National Informatics Centre (NIC), Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, Govt. of India, Delhi. The appellants/ complainants/ Public Information Officer's (PIO's)/ First Appellate Authorities (FAA's) will be sent the notice/ status regarding the next date of hearing and

disposal of the case by means of SMS facility on their mobile phones. This facility is in addition to the existing written notices which are being sent by post.

Disclosing this here today Suresh Arora, Punjab State Chief Information Commissioner said that in the last one year i.e. from 01-05-2019 to 30-04-2020 approx. 5200 cases were filed before the Commission. Considering the fact that for every case there is an appellant/complainant and respondent, a large number of information seekers & officials will be benefited from this service. This will also eliminate the need of the information seekers/ PIO's/ FAA's to wait for the notice of next date issued by the Commission and frequent visits to the Commission's website to know about the date of hearing of their cases. This facility will save a lot of money, time and energy of the appellants, complainants and the public authorities.

He said that this facility will add another communication channel to be used by the Commission to reach the general public. Further, this facility will be enhanced to give general messages regarding RTI awareness. SMS's will be sent to the public in

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both English and Punjabi. Since it is one way communication and the Commission will send the information as explained above, the information seekers and public authorities will not be able to reply through this service to the Commission. It has been observed by the Commission that some of the information seekers/ litigants do not provide their mobile number while filing the application. The Commission appeals to all the information seekers/ litigants to provide the mobile number in future so that they are able to take benefit of SMS service.

Divulging more Mr, Arora Said the PSIC disposes of its cases by physical hearing and through video conference facility. The Video Conference facility available with the Punjab State Information Commission covers all the districts of Punjab and the hearing of the cases is conducted in the office, of the respective Deputy Commissioner.

Post COVID-19 situation, the Commission has decided to use modern technology in order to deliver justice to the information seekers. The Commission will now hear cases through Cisco Webex VC which is approved by Deptt. of Governance Reforms, Punjab in addition to Video Conferencing. With the usage of Cisco Webex VC, the information seekers and public authorities will take the advantage of connecting with the Commission for hearing of their cases directly from their home or workplaces. It will benefit the information seekers. They can send soft copy of their applications and information related to their cases to the bench concerned by email. The hearing of their cases will be conducted on Cisco Webex VC. The information seeker and public authorities will be sent the Cisco Webex VC link on their mobiles through SMS, prior to date of hearing.

The SMS facility and hearing of cases through Webex VC software has been launched today 22-05-2020 by Chief Information Commissioner, Punjab in the presence of other State Information Commissioners, Punjab and Secretary to the Commission.

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