



**Central Information Commission**  
**Room No.306, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, August Kranti Bhawan,**  
**Bhikaji Cama Place, New Delhi – 110 066**  
**Website: [www.cic.gov.in](http://www.cic.gov.in) Tel No:26180512**

**Case No: CIC/SS/C/2013/000289**

**Dated 7.1.2014**

**Name of the Complainant : Mr. Subhash Chandra Agrawal**  
**Name of Respondent : Coal Ministry**  
**Date of Hearing : 10.12.2013**

**ORDER**

1. The complainant is present for the hearing. The respondent was represented by Shri A. Sanjay Sahay (Under Secretary).
2. Complainant has made an RTI request dated 16.5.13 seeking information about system of allocating coal blocks for the past ten years, role of Union Coal Minister in allocating coal blocks, file notings/correspondence/documents etc on coal block allocation and other information relating to coal block allocation.
3. However the respondent has stated in his letter dated 30.5.13 [letter.No.38040/46/2013-CA-I] that the complainant is required to furnish the requisite fee of Rs. 10 in favour of PAO, Ministry of Coal as per the RTI Act for providing the requisite information. The complainant has filed the present

complaint for initiation of penalty proceedings as per section 20 of the RTI Act mainly on the grounds that the complainant had endorsed the postal order in the name of "Accounts Officer" as per the DoPT circular no. F.10/9/2008-IR dated 5.12.2008, however, the CPIO vide response dated 30.5.2013 declined to accept postal order requiring a fresh one in the name of "PAO, Ministry of Coal". The complainant submits that difficulty with RTI petitioners is that if postal-orders are left blank for filling up name of payee by the public authority, these are at times also returned because many CPIOs do not accept blank left postal orders. The complainant submits that some advisory note may kindly be put in the verdict from the Central Information Commission for Department of Personnel & Training (DoPT) and Department of Posts to introduce RTI stamps (like revenue stamps) not only to remove such harassment to RTI petitioners, but also to save largely on heavy handling cost on postal orders which, as per an RTI response, was Rupees 22.71 as valued in the year 2006. The complainant has also invited the attention towards a full bench decision dated **27.8.2013** of the Central Information Commission in file no. **CIC/BS/C/2013/000149/LS, CIC/BS/C/2013/000072/LS and CIC/LS/C/2010/000108/LS**. The relevant part of the decision dated 27.8.2013 is being reproduced as under:

*"On a thoughtful consideration of the matter, the Commission makes the following recommendations to the Ministries/Departments/Public Authorities of the Central Government u/s 25(5) of the RTI Act:*

*i) All public authorities shall direct the officers under their command to accept demand drafts or banker cheques or IPOs payable to their Accounts Officers of the public authority. This is in line with clause (b) of Rule 6 of the RTI Rules, 2012. In other words, no instrument shall be returned by any officer of the public authority on the ground that it has not been drawn in the name of a particular officer. So long as the instrument has been drawn in*

*favour of the Accounts Officer, it shall be accepted in all circumstances.*

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*vii) The best solution to the fee related problems appears to be issue RTI stamps of the denomination of Rs. 10/- by the department of posts. It would be a time and cost effective step. The Commission would urge Department of Posts/DoPT to consider the viability of this suggestion with utmost dispatch."*

4. The complainant submits that it is appreciable of Department of Posts to go further by promising issue of RTI stamps not only for RTI fees but also for photocopying charges under RTI Act. And further that by the same decision released by PTI news agency on 17.9.2013, Department of Posts also announced that RTI petitions addressed to Central Public Authorities would be accepted in all about 1.5 lakh post offices across the country instead of present just 4500 Post Offices. The complainant submits that so far no stamps have been issued and that not only Ministry of Coal may be directed to accept IPOs in the name of Accounts Officer but also that the Department of Posts may be reminded of their assurance for issue of RTI stamps.
  
5. The Commission hereby directs the respondent to be more cautious with regard to matters of acceptance of postal orders and to ensure that the postal orders drawn in favour of the Accounts Officer are accepted by the respondent. Furthermore, in view of the submissions of the complainant, a copy of this order shall be provided to the Department of Posts as well for taking necessary action and to apprise the Commission regarding the present status with regard to the issuance of RTI stamps.

Sushma Singh  
Chief Information Commissioner

Authenticated True Copy

(DC Singh)

Deputy Registrar

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