



Muzzling information

Posted at: 26/07/2018

The RTI Act Amendment Bill must be junked

Highlights

- The RTI Act fixes the tenure of information commissioners at five years, subject to the retirement age of 65 years.
- Further, Sections 13 and 15 of the law state that the salaries, allowances and other terms of service of the Chief of the Central Information Commission shall be the same as that of the Chief Election Commissioner.
- Those of the Central Information Commissioners and State Chief Commissioners will be on par with Election Commissioners.
- The Chief and other Election Commissioners are paid a salary equal to the salary of a judge of the Supreme Court, which is decided by Parliament.

Issues

- The selection committee for the appointment of Central Information Commissioners is headed by the Prime Minister.
- Since May 2014, not a single Commissioner of the Central Information Commission has been appointed without citizens having to approach courts.
- It was without a chief for 10 months.
- The RTI Amendment Bill comes at a time when the Supreme Court has issued notice to the government for failing to fill vacancies in the Commission.
- Out of a total sanctioned strength of 11 Commissioners, there are currently four vacancies and four more are due to arise in 2018, including that of the chief.
- Failure to make timely appointments is leading to huge backlogs of appeals and complaints resulting in inordinate delays in the Commission, which render the law meaningless for citizens.

Source: [The Hindu](#)

