

News Letter

RTI Week Celebrations – 2018

The Tamil Nadu Information Commission organized the RTI WEEK CELEBRATIONS – 2018.

The programme was inaugurated by Thiru.Banwarilal Purohit, Hon'ble Governor of Tamil Nadu at a function held at Raj Bhavan on 5th October, 2018, by lighting Kuthuvilakku to mark the inauguration of RTI Week Celebrations – 2018. Dr.M.Sheela Priya, I.A.S. (R), State Chief Information Commissioner delivered the Welcome address. Tvl.R.Dakshinamurthy, G.Murugan, S.Selvaraj, S.T.Tamilkumar, Dr.R.Pratapkumar and S.Muthuraj, State Information Commissioners, Thiru.R.Rajagopal, I.A.S., Additional Chief Secretary to Governor, Dr.S.Swarna, I.A.S., Secretary to Government, Personnel and Administrative Reforms Department, Tmt.M.P.Nirmala, I.A.S. (R), Chairperson, Commission for Protection of Child Rights, Tmt.R.Vasuki, I.A.S. (R), Chairperson, Tamil Nadu State Food Commission and other dignitaries participated in the function.

The Hon'ble Governor of Tamil Nadu in his Special Address mentioned that the Celebrations are meant to publicly pronounce to the World, the power of the people to obtain information from the Government a right which was denied to them under the system of administration put in place by the British Centuries ago.

The Hon'ble Governor recalled the evolution of the RTI Act in India which was made possible by sustained struggle of the people led by the Mazdoor Kisan Shakthi Sangathan and other Non Governmental Organisations in several parts of the Country. A National Campaign for People's Right to Information was formed in August, 1996 and it played a significant role in exerting its weight behind the introduction of a legislation for the Right to Information. During the course of implementation of the RTI Act for more than a decade, as

rightly pointed out by our Hon'ble Prime Minister Thiru. Narendra Modiji, it has become a tool for 'Good Governance'. It is also seen that the information seekers use the RTI Act not just to access information, but also to address their grievances. Of late the RTI Act is getting transformed as an enabling tool for redressal of grievances. The Hon'ble Governor in his concluding note said that he has been harping on the themes of honesty, transparency and efficiency in all his speeches and therefore more happy to be serving the cause of the Right to Information for it ensures transparency in governance. He said that with the passage of time measures and method of making use of the provisions of the Act will get refined even more resulting in greater benefits to the Common public. He called up on that all should contribute their energy to that effect.

The Registrar, Tamil Nadu Information Commission delivered the Vote of Thanks.

After the conclusion of the inauguration Programme, a Street Play on creating awareness on Right to Information Act was performed by indigent artists of the State under the guidance of Dr. Kaleeswaran, Director, Alternative Media Centre, Chennai.

The Street Play based on folk arts will be performed by the indigent folk artists of the State at places of public gathering in the following 25 Districts during the RTI Week Celebrations from 5th October – 12th October, 2018:-

Ariyalur, Perambalur, Tiruppur, The Nilgiris, Erode, Salem, Dharmapuri, Krishnagiri, Ramanathapuram, Sivagangai, Theni, Dindigul, Tirunelveli, Trichy, Thoothukudi, Virudhunagar, Pudukkottai, Thanjavur, Namakkal, Karur, Nagapattinam, Thiruvarur, Villupuram, Tiruvannamalai and Cuddalore.



RTI WEEK CELEBRATIONS – 2018
RAJ BHAVAN, CHENNAI



சென்னை ராஜ்பவன் தர்பார் அரங்கில்

2018 ஆம் ஆண்டு அக்டோபர் திங்கள்

5 ஆம் நாள் காலை 10 மணிக்கு

மாண்புமிகு தமிழ்நாடு ஆளுநர்

திரு. பன்வாரிலால் புரோகித் அவர்கள்

தகவல் பெறும் உரிமைச் சட்ட வார விழாவை

துவக்கி வைப்பார்கள்.

தாங்கள் இவ்விழாவில் பங்கேற்று சிறப்பிக்குமாறு அன்புடன்

கேட்டுக் கொள்கிறேன்.

கே.வி.ராமமூர்த்தி
பதிவாளர்
தமிழ்நாடு தகவல் ஆணையம்

வருகை அறிவிப்பு :044-2431 2845



The Tamil Nadu Information Commission
invites you to the inauguration of
RTI WEEK CELEBRATIONS, 2018
by
Thiru. BANWARILAL PUROHIT
Hon'ble Governor of Tamil Nadu,
at Durbar Hall, Raj Bhavan
on 5th October, 2018 at 10.00.a.m.

K. V. Ramamoorthy
Registrar
Tamil Nadu Information Commission

RSVP : 044 - 2431 2845

PROGRAMME

1. Tamil Thai Vazhthu
2. Lighting of Kuthuvilakku
3. Welcome Address -
Dr.M.Sheela Priya
State Chief Information Commissioner
4. Special Address:
Thiru. BANWARILAL PUROHIT
Hon'ble Governor of Tamil Nadu
5. Vote of Thanks:
Thiru. K.V.Ramamoorthy
Registrar
6. National Anthem
7. RTI-Awareness Programme - Street Play

This invitation is not Transferable

Please bring this Invitation Card
and be seated by 9.30.a.m.

Admission for one person only

Kindly avoid hand bags / brief cases etc.

அழைப்பிதழ் மாற்றத்தக்கதல்ல.
இந்த அழைப்பிதழை தங்களுடன் கொண்டுவரவும்.

காலை 9.30 மணிக்குள் இருக்கையில் அமரும்படி
கேட்டுக்கொள்கிறோம்.

அனுமதி ஒருவர் மட்டும்.
கைப்பை மற்றும் கைப்பெட்டி ஆகியவற்றை எடுத்து
வருவதைத் தவிர்க்கவும்.

CARD No.

**ADDRESS BY THIRU BANWARILAL PUROHIT, HON'BLE GOVERNOR
OF TAMIL NADU AT THE INAUGURATION OF RTI WEEK CELEBRATIONS,
2018 ORGANISED BY THE TAMIL NADU INFORMATION COMMISSION AT
DURBAR HALL, RAJ BHAVAN, CHENNAI ON 05.10.2018 AT 10.00 A.M**

“It gives me immense pleasure to be here at the inauguration of the RTI Week Celebrations. The celebrations are meant to publicly pronounce to the world, the power of the people to obtain information from the Government a right which was denied to them under the system of administration put in place by the British Centuries ago.

To trace the history of the RTI Act, a mass based organization called the Mazdoor Kisan Shakthi Sangathan took an initiative to lead the people in one of the states of India to assert their Right to Information by asking for copies of bills and vouchers and names of persons who had been shown in the muster rolls for the construction of schools, dispensaries and community centres as having been paid wages. The schemes were reported to have been completed but in reality there was gross misappropriation of funds with the construction of school buildings, dispensaries and community centres remaining incomplete.

The Mazdoor Kisan Shakthi Sangathan was followed by similar requests in other States also. Another NGO in Andhra Pradesh conducted a mass awareness campaign across the State and through a ‘post card campaign’ made representations to the Prime Minister of India demanding the enactment of a law guaranteeing the right to information. A National Campaign for People’s Right to Information was formed in August, 1996 and it played a significant role in exerting its weight behind the introduction of a legislation for the Right to Information.

The Government of India introduced the Freedom of Information Bill in the Lok Sabha on 25th July, 2000, which was enacted as the Freedom of Information Act, 2002.

Even before the Freedom of Information Act was passed by the Parliament, several States in India had enacted their own legislations on Freedom of Right to Information. Tamil Nadu was the first State to introduce Right to Information Act in April, 1996.

The National Advisory Council set up by the Government of India in 2004 suggested important changes to be incorporated in the Freedom of Information Act. Hence, the Freedom of Information Act was repealed and a new legislation, the Right to Information Act, 2005 was enacted which came into effect on 12th October, 2005.

The enactment of the Act, in India is a historic event in the annals of democracy in India. Information is power and now every citizen has a right to access information “held by or under the control of” the public authorities. It is the duty of all public authorities to provide information sought by citizens. The RTI Act, seeks to establish that “transparency is the norm and secrecy is an exception” in the working of every public authority. It is no doubt that this is one of the most empowering and progressive legislations in the independent India.

1. The Right to Information Act empowers every citizen to
2. Ask any questions from the Government or seek any information
3. Take copies of any government documents
4. Inspect any government documents.
5. Inspect any Government works
6. Take samples of materials of any Government work

The Act extends to the whole of India except the State of Jammu and Kashmir. All bodies, which are constituted under the Constitution or under any law or under any Government notification or all bodies, including NGOs, which are owned, controlled or substantially financed by the Government are covered by this.

All private bodies, which are owned, controlled or substantially financed by the Government are directly covered. Others are indirectly covered. That is, if a government department can access information from any private body under any other Act, the same can be accessed by the citizen under the RTI Act through that government department.

A Public Information Officer can refuse information on 11 subjects that are listed in section 8 of the RTI Act. These include information received in confidence from foreign governments, information prejudicial to security, strategic, scientific or economic interests of the country, breach of privilege of legislatures, etc.

There is a list of agencies given in second schedule of the Act to which RTI Act does not apply. However, they also have to give information if it relates to matters pertaining to allegations of corruption or human rights violations.

The true spirit of democracy lies in transparency and accountability in governance by implementing the Act in letter and spirit. The implementation of the RTI regime for the past 13 years has seen a sea change in dissemination of information to the general public which was earlier held in secrecy and not disclosed by the public authorities.

During the course of implementation of the RTI Act for more than a decade, as rightly pointed out by our Hon'ble Prime Minister Thiru. Narendra Modiji, it has become a tool for 'Good Governance'.

It is also seen that the information seekers use the RTI Act not just to access information, but also to address their grievances. Of late the RTI Act is getting transformed as an enabling tool for redressal of grievances.

For the greater absorption of benefits towards of the RTI Act, the Central and the State Governments are obliged to create awareness about the provisions of the Act. The Government of India provides funds every year to conduct programmes for the purpose of creating such awareness among the public authorities and the common man. I congratulate the Tamil Nadu Information Commission for having organised the RTI Week Celebrations in such a grand manner. It shows their interest to serve the public and a desire to disseminate information about the RTI Act to the maximum number of people.

I congratulate the commission for its efforts and wish them well.

I have been harping on the themes of honesty transparency and efficiency in all my speeches. I am therefore more than happy to be a serving the cause of the right to information for it ensures transparency in governance. I am sure that with the passage of time measures and methods of making use of the provisions of the Act will get refined even more resulting in greater benefits to the common public. May all of us contribute our energies to that effect".

**Vote of Thanks by K.V.Ramamoorthy, Registrar of Tamil Nadu
Information Commission at the Inauguration of RTI Week
Celebrations, 2018 at Durbar Hall, Raj Bhavan, Chennai on
05.10.2018 at 10.00 a.m.**

Hon'ble Governor of Tamil Nadu, Respected State Chief Information Commissioner, State Information Commissioners, Vice Chancellors, Secretaries of Tamil Nadu Government Departments, Other dignitaries, Ladies and Gentlemen

I have the pleasant duty of offering the vote of thanks. I deem it a great honour and privilege to propose vote of thanks.

Performance expectations of people are very high everywhere especially in Tamil Nadu and there is increased demand for transparency in governance. There is a conceptual shift from a duty-based design of the existing administrative framework to a citizen – centric rights based deliverance.

On a review conducted by the Commission in January, 2018, it was observed that the pendency of Non-Compliance petitions and other petitions received from the RTI Appellants during the years 2013 to 2015 was 4,302. These petitions were systematically taken up and disposed. The Non-Compliance petitions relating to the years 2016 and 2017 numbering 5,460 will be disposed of before the end of December, 2018.

During the year 2018, the total receipt of second appeals and Complaint Petitions upto August, 2018 was 6,516 and the total number of cases for disposal was 12,911 including pending cases of 6,395 of previous years. The Commission has disposed of 7,493 cases from out of the above said pending cases. Relentless and consistent efforts are being undertaken to dispose of the remaining Second Appeals and Complaint Petitions expeditiously by way of conducting repeated hearings by the Commission.

A complete overhauling of website has been undertaken in conjunction with the National Informatics Centre.

Office Automation is under process in consultation with Tamil Nadu Data Centre and ELCOT.

Online filing of second appeals has been enabled from 13.08.2018.

The Commission felt a need for intensive training of the Public Information Officers. There is an estimated number of about one lakh Public Information Officers in our State. In conjunction with the Anna Institute of Management an intensive standardized and formatted training capsules have been designed by the Commission with the guidance of Thiru. T.K.Ramachandran, IAS, former Director of Anna Institute of Management and the training has commenced in several Districts.

The State Information Commissioners travel to the Districts and under the aegis of District Collectors conduct training programmes on RTI to the Public Information Officers.

The Commission is also in the process of conducting training for First Appellate Authorities as it is strongly felt that 75% the RTI petitions can be resolved at the level of First Appellate Authority.

The 1st segment of training started from 12.07.2018 and will be upto April, 2019 over a period of 85 days.

Every year RTI Week Celebrations is undertaken from 5th to 12th October and Rs.3 lakhs is given by the Government of India.

This year, we are fortunate in having the Hon'ble Governor of Tamil Nadu to inaugurate the RTI Week Celebrations.

The Commission has organized a series of street plays to be conducted at 25 District Head Quarters by the Alternate Media Centre, Chennai, engaging indigent artists of the State during 5th October to 12th October, 2018. The programme is scheduled to be performed at places of large public gathering such as Parks, Railway Stations etc., to create more awareness among the Public on the provisions of the Act.

The proposal of the Commission to the Government of Tamil Nadu for allotment of land and funds for the construction of own building is under active consideration.

First and foremost, I thank our Hon'ble Governor of Tamil Nadu, who despite his busy schedule has found time to grace this occasion and we are deeply grateful to our Hon'ble Governor. Sir, you have inspired us with your special address and we will continue to look towards you for guidance and further inspiration.

I thank Tmt. M.P. Nirmala, Chairperson, Tamil Nadu State Commission for Protection of Child Rights and also Tmt. R. Vasuki, Chairperson, Tamil Nadu State Food Commission for their valuable presence. May I take this opportunity to express my sincere thanks to All Vice Challcellors and Secretaries to various Departments of Government of Tamil Nadu.

I thank Thiru. R. Rajagopal, Additional Chief Secretary to Governor who has been very helpful in guiding us for this function.

I thank Dr.Kaleeswaran, Director, Alternative Media Centre and the Artists who are going to perform the Street Play about RTI Act awareness here at Chennai and other Districts of Tamil Nadu.

I thank officers of Information and Public Relations Department, PWD Engineers, Civil and Electrical for their arrangements of this event.

I thank Press and Media people who are present here.

I thank Public Information Officers and other Officers of Government Departments, who have attended this function.

I once again present my humble gratitude to all the dignitaries and the august invitees who are present here today with us.

Thank you.
