

CENTRAL INFORMATION COMMISSION

Room No. 305, 3rd Floor, CIC Bhavan, Baba Gangnath Marg, Munirka,
New Delhi-110067, website:cic.gov.in

Appeal No.:-CIC/LICOI/A/2017/112394-BJ

Appellant : Mr. Ativ Sharma,
Respondent : CPIO
LIC of India, Divisional Office,
Jeevan Prakash, Prabhat Nagar,
P. B. No. 69, Meerut – 250001
Date of Hearing : 13.04.2018
Date of Decision : 16.04.2018

Date of RTI application	07.05.2016
CPIO's response	25.05.2016
Date of the First Appeal	06.06.2016
First Appellate Authority's response	06.07.2016
Date of diarised receipt of Appeal by the Commission	23.02.2017

ORDER

FACTS:

The Appellant vide his RTI application sought information regarding the reasons for not receiving the second instalment of Money Back Policy No. 25258431 and issues related thereto.

The CPIO, vide its letter dated 25.05.2016 stated that as per their records, the 2nd S.B. due on 28.03.2011 had been paid on 28.03.2011 vide cheque no. 78300 for Rs. 10,000/- and the same had been encashed that day itself. Dissatisfied by the response, the Appellant approached the FAA. The FAA vide its order dated 08.07.2016 re-iterated the response of the CPIO.

HEARING:

Facts emerging during the hearing:

The following were present:

Appellant: Absent;

Respondent: Mr. J. P. Hariyal, Manager (CRM)/CPIO and Mr. R. R. Agarwal, AO through VC;

The Appellant remained absent during the hearing. Mr. Sarabjit, Network Engineer NIC Studio at Moradabad confirmed his absence. The Respondent explained that the CPIO and the FAA had suitably responded to the RTI queries. Subsequently, additional details sought by the Appellant were also furnished after receipt of information from Axis Bank/ SBI Moradabad.

In its written submission dated 06.04.2018, the Respondent stated that their Morababad Branch had issued a cheque favouring ATEEV SHARMA on Axis Bank, Moradabad dated 28.03.2011 for Rs. 10,000/- towards money back payment under policy no. 252528431 and the cheque was credited on 30.03.2011 to the policy holder's Savings Bank Account with SBI, PBB Branch, Moradabad which was also confirmed by the said branch. While correcting the reply of the FAA, it was stated that the FAA inadvertently wrote the name Ateev Kumar Sharma instead of Ateev Sharma.

The Commission referred to the definition of information u/s Section 2(f) of the RTI Act, 2005 which is reproduced below:

“information” means any material in any form, including records, documents, memos, e-mails, opinions, advices, press releases, circulars, orders, logbooks, contracts, report, papers, samples, models, data material held in any electronic form and information relating to any private body which can be accessed by a public authority under any other law for the time being in force.”

Furthermore, a reference can also be made to the relevant extract of Section 2 (j) of the RTI Act, 2005 which reads as under:

“(j) right to information” means the right to information accessible under this Act which is held by or under the control of any public authority and includes”

In this context a reference was made to the Hon'ble Supreme Court decision in 2011 (8) SCC 497 (CBSE Vs. Aditya Bandopadhyay), wherein it was held as under:

35..... “It is also not required to provide ‘advice’ or ‘opinion’ to an applicant, nor required to obtain and furnish any ‘opinion’ or ‘advice’ to an applicant. The reference to ‘opinion’ or ‘advice’ in the definition of ‘information’ in section 2(f) of the Act, only refers to such material available in the records of the public authority. Many public authorities have, as a public relation exercise, provide advice, guidance and opinion to the citizens. But that is purely voluntary and should not be confused with any obligation under the RTI Act.”

Furthermore, the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India in Khanapuram Gandaiah Vs. Administrative Officer and Ors. Special Leave Petition (Civil) No.34868 OF 2009 (Decided on January 4, 2010) had held as under:

6. “...Under the RTI Act “information” is defined under Section 2(f) which provides:

“information” means any material in any form, including records, documents, memos, e-mails, opinions, advices, press releases, circulars, orders, logbooks, contracts, report, papers, samples, models, data material held in any electronic form and information relating to

any private body which can be accessed by a public authority under any other law for the time being in force.”

This definition shows that an applicant under Section 6 of the RTI Act can get any information which is already in existence and accessible to the public authority under law. Of course, under the RTI Act an applicant is entitled to get copy of the opinions, advices, circulars, orders, etc., but he cannot ask for any information as to why such opinions, advices, circulars, orders, etc. have been passed.”

7. *“...the Public Information Officer is not supposed to have any material which is not before him; or any information he could have obtained under law. Under Section 6 of the RTI Act, an applicant is entitled to get only such information which can be accessed by the “public authority” under any other law for the time being in force. The answers sought by the petitioner in the application could not have been with the public authority nor could he have had access to this information and Respondent No. 4 was not obliged to give any reasons as to why he had taken such a decision in the matter which was before him.”*

The Commission observed that the framework of the RTI Act, 2005 restricts the jurisdiction of the Commission to provide a ruling on the issues pertaining to access/ right to information and to venture into the merits of a case or redressal of grievance. The Commission in a plethora of decisions including Shri Vikram Singh v. Delhi Police, North East District, CIC/SS/A/2011/001615 dated 17.02.2012, Sh. Triveni Prasad Bahuguna vs. LIC of India, Lucknow CIC/DS/A/2012/000906 dated 06.09.2012, Mr. H. K. Bansal vs. CPIO & GM (OP), MTNL CIC/LS/A/2011/000982/BS/1786 dated 29.01.2013 had held that RTI Act was not the proper law for redressal of grievances/disputes.

The Hon’ble Supreme Court of India in the matter of Union of India v. Namit Sharma in REVIEW PETITION [C] No.2309 OF 2012 IN Writ Petition [C] No.210 OF 2012 with State of Rajasthan and Anr. vs. Namit Sharma Review Petition [C] No.2675 OF 2012 In Writ Petition [C] No.210 OF 2012 had held as under:

“While deciding whether a citizen should or should not get a particular information “which is held by or under the control of any public authority”, the Information Commission does not decide a dispute between two or more parties concerning their legal rights other than their right to get information in possession of a public authority. This function obviously is not a judicial function, but an administrative function conferred by the Act on the Information Commissions.”

Furthermore, the High Court of Delhi in the matter of Hansi Rawat and Anr. vs. Punjab National Bank and Ors. LPA No.785/2012 dated 11.01.2013 held as under:

“6. The proceedings under the RTI Act do not entail detailed adjudication of the said aspects. The dispute relating to dismissal of the

*appellant No.2 LPA No.785/2012 from the employment of the respondent Bank is admittedly pending consideration before the appropriate forum. The purport of the RTI Act is to enable the appellants to effectively pursue the said dispute. The question, as to what inference if any is to be drawn from the response of the PIO of the respondent Bank to the RTI application of the appellants, **is to be drawn in the said proceedings and as aforesaid the proceedings under the RTI Act cannot be converted into proceedings for adjudication of disputes as to the correctness of the information furnished.***”

The Appellant was not present to contest the submission of the Respondent or to substantiate his claims further.

DECISION:

Keeping in view the facts of the case and the submissions made by the Respondent, no further intervention of the Commission is required in the matter. For redressal of his grievance, the Appellant is advised to approach an appropriate forum.

The Appeal stands disposed accordingly.

(Bimal Julka)
Information Commissioner

Authenticated True Copy:

(K.L.Das)
Deputy Registrar