

Regional workshop on Proactive Disclosure & Notifications of RTI rules,
Sponsored by DoPT Gol on 23rd March, 2013



Inauguration by SIC HP Sh. KD Batish &
Dr. Purnima Chauhan, IAS Director, HIPA



Prize to Sh. Manzur Mohammad For Success Story in RTI



Panel Discussion on Seven Year of RTI and Looking Ahead Chaired by Sh. Bhimsen, CIC HP
From left: Dr. Ajay Srivastav, Dr. JN Barowalia, Dr. Purnima Chauhan, Sh. Bhimsen, Sh. TG Negi, Dr. Gopal Sanghaik



Prize to Dr. Himmal Chand for Success Story in RTI



Prize to Sh. Mohinder Singh for Success Story in RTI

Youth in remote areas using RTI to raise public issues

RAKESH LOHUM/TNS

SHIMLA, APRIL 30

The initiative taken by the Himachal Institute of Public Administration (HIPA) to create awareness among people, particularly in the backward areas, about the Right to Information (RTI) Act has brought to fore the efforts being made by youth in remote areas of the state to expose corruption at the grassroots.

The institute has been organising workshops to educate common people and also government officials, especially public information officers, and has decided to invite success stories to honour the efforts of the RTI



RTI activists Mohinder Singh (left) and Manjur Mohammed being honoured by an official of the Himachal Institute of Public Administration. A Tribune photograph

activists from the region. Of the four persons selected for the honour two were from the remote pockets of the most backward Chamba district of the state. The remaining two were from Chandigarh and Uttarakhand.

While Mohinder Singh of Chechi village in Tisa has used the RTI to expose a scam in MNREGA by proving that payments were being made by the panchayat functionaries in collusion with block officials. The information obtained by him clearly showed that five persons who were paid wages for working under various projects were actually school

students and they were regularly attending school during the period and had even appeared in board exams. Similarly four others, including two women, were mid-day meal workers and one person was working as a water carrier in a school.

He filed a complaint with the Deputy Commissioner with all documents and an inquiry was ordered. The report of the block development officer who conducted the inquiry clearly stated that there was bungling and on its basis, the pradhan was suspended. However, Mohinder Singh laments that the government took no action against the officials, including junior engineer, panchayat secretary, technical assistant and assistant secretary, and even the pradhan was reinstated. It was a big scam and some persons were paid wages for 150 to 262 days during 2007-09 period and the funds swindled added up to significant amount for a panchayat. Further, fake payments were also made in execution of works to some persons for carriage and supply of material and this was also pointed out in the inquiry report.

Manjur Mohammed exposed the scam in Kanyadan Yojna under which the government gives grant to widows for the marriage of their daughters. RTI information obtained by him revealed 13 cases in which grants were secured by women who were not widows and the beneficiaries mostly related to the local panchayat functionaries. He had to face the wrath of his community for raising the issue and was virtually ostracised.

Nodal officer for RTI Initiative Gopal Krishna said success stories were invited under the Government of India scheme to recognise the best RTI effort of individuals and best RTI practices by departments. There was no entry in the best practices category from any department. The four persons selected in the individual category were given a token cash reward along with a citation.

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