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Department of Atomic Energy
Vigilance Section

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No. 1/8(6)/2013-Vig/6685

May 23, 2013

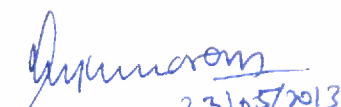
Subject: Delhi High Courts decision in the matter of disclosure of information under the provisions of RTI Act, 2005 relating to disciplinary matters.

A copy of the CVC circular No. 07/4/2013 bearing reference No. CVC/RTI/Misc/10/002 dated 4.4.2013 on the above subject is enclosed for information.

2. While disposing the Writ Petition in LPA No. 618/2012 dated 6.11.2012 filed by UPSC in the matter of disclosure of information relating to disciplinary matters under the provisions of Right to Information Act, 2005 the Hon'ble High Court of Delhi has reiterated the dicta in the judgment of the Hon'ble Supreme Court in **Girish Ramchandra Despande Vs. Central Information Commissioner** reported as MANU/SC/0862/2012 (copy available on DAE web site). As per the above Hon'ble Supreme Court judgement, the disciplinary case orders and documents relating to disciplinary proceedings are "personal information" within the meaning of section 8 (1)(j) of the RTI Act 2005, the disclosure of which normally has no relationship to any public activities or public interest, and disclosure of which would cause unwarranted invasion of the privacy of an individual.

3. All CPIOs/Appellate Authorities may take due cognizance of the judgement/order of the Hon'ble High Court of Delhi while deciding RTI applications and appeals relating to disclosure of documents/information relating to vigilance/disciplinary proceedings (including orders of the Disciplinary Authority in any disciplinary proceedings matter).

Encl: A.a.


23/05/2013
(A. Sukumaran)
Under Secretary

All Appellate Authority/CPIO/APIO of DAE and
its Constituent Units/PSUs/AIs.

Copy: 1. RTI Cell, DAE.
2. Head, MSG with a copy of the Supreme Court judgment for uploading on DAE Website.



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केन्द्रीय सतर्कता आयोग
CENTRAL VIGILANCE COMMISSION



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CIRCULAR NO. 07/4/2013

सं./ No..... **CVC/RTI/Misc/10/002**

दिनांक / Dated..... **04.04.2013**

Sub: Delhi High Court's decision in LPA No. 618/2012 dated 06.11.2012 in the matter of disclosure of information under the provisions of RTI Act, relating to disciplinary matters.

The attention of the CVOs concerned is drawn to the Judgement/Order passed by the Hon'ble High Court of Delhi dated 06.11.2012 in LPA No. 618/2012 in case of Union Public Service Commission Vs R. K. Jain, in which the issue of disclosure of information/documents under the provisions of RTI Act, pertaining to vigilance/disciplinary proceedings has been considered by the Hon'ble Court.

2. The Hon'ble Court in its Judgement, had observed that:

"The counsel for the respondent has argued that in the case before the Supreme Court the CIC itself had denied the information while in the present case CIC itself has allowed the information. To our mind the same is irrelevant. The counsel for the respondent has next sought to take us through the reasoning given by the learned Single Judge. However, in the light of the dicta aforesaid of the Supreme Court and which if applicable to the facts of the present case is binding on this Bench, we are not required to go into the correctness or otherwise of the reasoning given by the learned Single Judge. Faced therewith the counsel for the respondent has lastly contended that the appellant UPSC in the present case is not the employer of the officer Shri G.S. Narang, information pertaining to whom was sought and the principle laid down by the Supreme Court is applicable to the employer only. We however fail to see the difference. The ratio of the dicta aforesaid of the Supreme Court is that the disciplinary orders and the documents in the course of disciplinary proceedings are personal information within the meaning of Section 8(1)(j) and the disclosure of which normally has no relationship to any public activities or public interest and disclosure of which would cause unwarranted invasion of the privacy of an individual. Though the appellant UPSC is not the employer of Shri G.S. Narang, information pertaining to whom is sought by the respondent, but his employer had sought the advice/opinion/recommendation of the appellant UPSC in the matter of disciplinary proceedings against the said Shri G.S. Narang and we fail to see as to how it makes a difference whether the information relating to disciplinary proceedings is sought from the employer or from the consultant of the employer. What is exempt in the hands of the employer would certainly be exempt in the hands of consultant of the employer also. The advice given by the appellant UPSC would necessarily pertain to the disciplinary action against Shri G.S. Narang. Section 8(1)(j) exempts from disclosure personal information, irrespective of with whom it is possessed and from whom disclosure thereof is sought".

"The respondent at no stage set-up a case of the said personal information being required in public interest. In fact when we asked the counsel for the respondent as to what was the public interest in which the said personal information was sought, he replied by stating that an information seeker under the Act is not required to state the reasons for seeking the information. That being the position, the need for any discussion further on the said aspect does not arise".

*"We therefore, following the dicta in **Girish Ramchandra Deshpande**, set aside the judgment dated 13th july, 2012 of the learned Single Judge and allow the writ petition preferred by the appellant UPSC, consequently setting aside the order dated 12th January, 2011 of the CIC".*

3. The CVOs may bring the above quoted Judgement/Order of the Hon'ble High Court of Delhi to the notice of the all CPIOs/Appellate Authorities of their respective organization, who may take due cognizance of the same, while deciding the RTI Applications and Appeals relating to disclosure of documents/information pertaining to vigilance/disciplinary proceedings (including Orders of the Disciplinary Authority).

4. The complete decision of Hon'ble High Court of Delhi in the aforementioned case is available on its website www.delhihighcourt.nic.in in downloadable form under the head "JUDGEMENTS".



[Rajiv Verma]
Under Secretary & 'Nodal' CPIO
Tele.:24651081

To,

All Chief Vigilance Officer.

REPORTABLE

IN THE SUPREME COURT OF INDIA

CIVIL APPELLATE JURISDICTION

Special Leave Petition (Civil) No. 27734 of 2012
(@ CC 14781/2012)

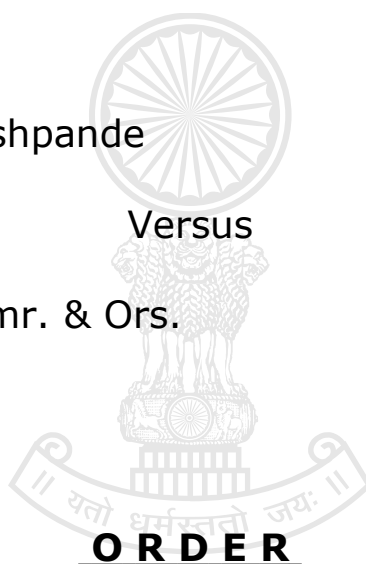
Girish Ramchandra Deshpande

.. Petitioner

Versus

Cen. Information Commr. & Ors.

.. Respondents



JUDGMENT

1. Delay condoned.
2. We are, in this case, concerned with the question whether the Central Information Commissioner (for short 'the CIC') acting under the Right to Information Act, 2005 (for short 'the RTI Act')

was right in denying information regarding the third respondent's personal matters pertaining to his service career and also denying the details of his assets and liabilities, movable and immovable properties on the ground that the information sought for was qualified to be personal information as defined in clause (j) of Section 8(1) of the RTI Act.

3. The petitioner herein had submitted an application on 27.8.2008 before the Regional Provident Fund Commissioner (Ministry of Labour, Government of India) calling for various details relating to third respondent, who was employed as an Enforcement Officer in Sub-Regional Office, Akola, now working in the State of Madhya Pradesh. As many as 15 queries were made to which the Regional Provident Fund Commissioner, Nagpur gave the following reply on 15.9.2008:

"As to Point No.1: Copy of appointment order of Shri A.B. Lute, is in 3 pages. You have sought the details of salary in respect of Shri A.B. Lute, which

relates to personal information the disclosures of which has no relationship to any public activity or interest, it would cause unwarranted invasion of the privacy of individual hence denied as per the RTI provision under Section 8(1)(j) of the Act.

As to Point No.2: Copy of order of granting Enforcement Officer Promotion to Shri A.B. Lute, is in 3 Number. Details of salary to the post along with statutory and other deductions of Mr. Lute is denied to provide as per RTI provisions under Section 8(1)(j) for the reasons mentioned above.

As to Point NO.3: All the transfer orders of Shri A.B. Lute, are in 13 Numbers. Salary details is rejected as per the provision under Section 8(1)(j) for the reason mentioned above.

As to Point No.4: The copies of memo, show cause notice, censure issued to Mr. Lute, are not being provided on the ground that it would cause unwarranted invasion of the privacy of the individual and has no relationship to any public activity or interest. Please see RTI provision under Section 8(1)(j).

- As to Point No.5: Copy of EPF (Staff & Conditions) Rules 1962 is in 60 pages.
- As to Point No.6: Copy of return of assets and liabilities in respect of Mr. Lute cannot be provided as per the provision of RTI Act under Section 8(1)(j) as per the reason explained above at point No.1.
- As to Point No.7: Details of investment and other related details are rejected as per the provision of RTI Act under Section 8(1)(j) as per the reason explained above at point No.1.
- As to Point No.8: Copy of report of item wise and value wise details of gifts accepted by Mr. Lute, is rejected as per the provisions of RTI Act under Section 8(1)(j) as per the reason explained above at point No.1.
- As to Point No.9: Copy of details of movable, immovable properties of Mr. Lute, the request to provide the same is rejected as per the RTI Provisions under Section 8(1)(j).
- As to Point No.10: Mr. Lute is not claiming for TA/DA for attending the criminal case pending at JMFC, Akola.
- As to Point No.11: Copy of Notification is in 2 numbers.

As to Point No.12: Copy of certified true copy of charge sheet issued to Mr. Lute – The matter pertains with head Office, Mumbai. Your application is being forwarded to Head Office, Mumbai as per Section 6(3) of the RTI Act, 2005.

As to Point No.13: Certified True copy of complete enquiry proceedings initiated against Mr. Lute – It would cause unwarranted invasion of privacy of individuals and has no relationship to any public activity or interest. Please see RTI provisions under Section 8(1)(j).

As to Point No.14: It would cause unwarranted invasion of privacy of individuals and has no relationship to any public activity or interest, hence denied to provide.

As to Point No.15: Certified true copy of second show cause notice – It would cause unwarranted invasion of privacy of individuals and has no relationship to any public activity or interest, hence denied to provide.”

4. Aggrieved by the said order, the petitioner approached the CIC. The CIC passed the order on 18.6.2009, the operative portion of the order reads as under:

“The question for consideration is whether the aforesaid information sought by the Appellant can be treated as ‘personal information’ as defined in clause (j) of Section 8(1) of the RTI Act. It may be pertinent to mention that this issue came up before the Full Bench of the Commission in Appeal No.CIC/AT/A/2008/000628 (**Milap Choraria v. Central Board of Direct Taxes**) and the Commission vide its decision dated 15.6.2009 held that “the Income Tax return have been rightly held to be personal information exempted from disclosure under clause (j) of Section 8(1) of the RTI Act by the CPIO and the Appellate Authority, and the appellant herein has not been able to establish that a larger public interest would be served by disclosure of this information. This logic would hold good as far as the ITRs of Shri Lute are concerned. I would like to further observe that the information which has been denied to the appellant essentially falls in two parts – (i) relating to the personal matters pertaining to his services career; and (ii) Shri Lute’s assets & liabilities, movable and immovable properties and other financial aspects. I have no hesitation in holding that this information also qualifies to be the ‘personal information’ as defined in clause (j) of Section 8(1) of the RTI Act and the appellant has not been able to convince the Commission that disclosure thereof is in larger public interest.”

5. The CIC, after holding so directed the second respondent to disclose the information at paragraphs 1, 2, 3 (only posting details), 5, 10, 11, 12,13 (only copies of the posting orders) to the appellant within a period of four weeks from the date of the order. Further, it was held that the information sought for with regard to the other queries did not qualify for disclosure.

6. Aggrieved by the said order, the petitioner filed a writ petition No.4221 of 2009 which came up for hearing before a learned Single Judge and the court dismissed the same vide order dated 16.2.2010. The matter was taken up by way of Letters Patent Appeal No.358 of 2011 before the Division Bench and the same was dismissed vide order dated 21.12.2011. Against the said order this special leave petition has been filed.

7. Shri A.P. Wachasunder, learned counsel appearing for the petitioner submitted that the documents sought for vide Sl. Nos.1, 2 and 3 were pertaining to appointment and promotion

and Sl. No.4 and 12 to 15 were related to disciplinary action and documents at Sl. Nos.6 to 9 pertained to assets and liabilities and gifts received by the third respondent and the disclosure of those details, according to the learned counsel, would not cause unwarranted invasion of privacy.

8. Learned counsel also submitted that the privacy appended to Section 8(1)(j) of the RTI Act widens the scope of documents warranting disclosure and if those provisions are properly interpreted, it could not be said that documents pertaining to employment of a person holding the post of enforcement officer could be treated as documents having no relationship to any public activity or interest.

9. Learned counsel also pointed out that in view of Section 6(2) of the RTI Act, the applicant making request for information is not obliged to give any reason for the requisition and the CIC was not justified in dismissing his appeal.

10. This Court in **Central Board of Secondary Education and another v. Aditya Bandopadhyay and others** (2011) 8 SCC 497 while dealing with the right of examinees to inspect evaluated answer books in connection with the examination conducted by the CBSE Board had an occasion to consider in detail the aims and object of the RTI Act as well as the reasons for the introduction of the exemption clause in the RTI Act, hence, it is unnecessary, for the purpose of this case to further examine the meaning and contents of Section 8 as a whole.

11. We are, however, in this case primarily concerned with the scope and interpretation to clauses (e), (g) and (j) of Section 8(1) of the RTI Act which are extracted herein below:

"8. Exemption from disclosure of information.- (1) Notwithstanding anything contained in this Act, there shall be no obligation to give any citizen,-

(e) information available to a person in his fiduciary relationship, unless the competent authority is satisfied that the larger public interest warrants the disclosure of such information;

(g) information, the disclosure of which would endanger the life or physical safety of any person or identify the source of information or assistance given in confidence for law enforcement or security purposes;

(j) information which relates to personal information the disclosure of which has no relationship to any public activity or interest, or which would cause unwarranted invasion of the privacy of the individual unless the Central Public Information Officer or the State Public Information Officer or the appellate authority, as the case may be, is satisfied that the larger public interest justifies the disclosure of such information.”

12. The petitioner herein sought for copies of all memos, show cause notices and censure/punishment awarded to the third respondent from his employer and also details viz. movable and immovable properties and also the details of his investments, lending and borrowing from Banks and other financial institutions. Further, he has also sought for the details of gifts stated to have accepted by the third respondent, his family members and friends and relatives at the marriage of his son. The information mostly sought for finds a place in the income tax returns of the third respondent. The question that has come up for consideration is

whether the above-mentioned information sought for qualifies to be "personal information" as defined in clause (j) of Section 8(1) of the RTI Act.

13. We are in agreement with the CIC and the courts below that the details called for by the petitioner i.e. copies of all memos issued to the third respondent, show cause notices and orders of censure/punishment etc. are qualified to be personal information as defined in clause (j) of Section 8(1) of the RTI Act. The performance of an employee/officer in an organization is primarily a matter between the employee and the employer and normally those aspects are governed by the service rules which fall under the expression "personal information", the disclosure of which has no relationship to any public activity or public interest. On the other hand, the disclosure of which would cause unwarranted invasion of privacy of that individual. Of course, in a given case, if the Central Public Information Officer or the State Public Information Officer of the Appellate Authority is satisfied that the

larger public interest justifies the disclosure of such information, appropriate orders could be passed but the petitioner cannot claim those details as a matter of right.

14. The details disclosed by a person in his income tax returns are "personal information" which stand exempted from disclosure under clause (j) of Section 8(1) of the RTI Act, unless involves a larger public interest and the Central Public Information Officer or the State Public Information Officer or the Appellate Authority is satisfied that the larger public interest justifies the disclosure of such information.

15. The petitioner in the instant case has not made a bona fide public interest in seeking information, the disclosure of such information would cause unwarranted invasion of privacy of the individual under Section 8(1)(j) of the RTI Act.

16. We are, therefore, of the view that the petitioner has not succeeded in establishing that the information sought for is for

the larger public interest. That being the fact, we are not inclined to entertain this special leave petition. Hence, the same is dismissed.

New Delhi
October 3, 2012



.....J.
(K. S. RADHAKRISHNAN)

.....J.
(DIPAK MISRA)

JUDGMENT