

Right to Information (Amendment) Bill, 2019

August 19, 2019

Source: Monthly Policy Review of PRS

Key features

- **Term of Information Commissioners under the Act:** Chief Information Commissioner (CIC) and Information Commissioners (ICs) are appointed at the national and state level to implement the provisions of the Act. The Act states that the CIC and other ICs (appointed at the central and state level) will hold office for a term of five years. The Bill removes this provision and states that the central government will notify the term of office for the CIC and the ICs.
- **Determination of salary under the Act:** The Act states that the salary of the CIC and ICs (at the central level) will be equivalent to the salary paid to the Chief Election Commissioner and Election Commissioners, respectively. Similarly, the salary of the CIC and ICs (at the state level) will be equivalent to the salary paid to the Election Commissioners and the Chief Secretary to the state government, respectively.
- The Bill seeks to amend these provisions to state that the **salaries, allowances, and other terms and conditions of service of the central and state CIC and ICs will be determined by the central government.**
- **Deductions in salary:** The Act states that at the time of the appointment of the CIC and ICs (at the central and state level), if they are receiving pension or any other retirement benefits for previous government service, their salaries will be reduced by an amount equal to the

pension.

- **Previous government service includes service under:** the central government, state government, corporation established under a central or state law, and government company owned or controlled by the central or state government.
- The Bill removes these provisions.

Proposed changes under the bill

The Bill changes the terms and conditions of service of the CIC and Information Commissioners at the centre and in states

Provision	RTI Act, 2005	RTI (Amendment) Bill, 2019
Term	The Chief Information Commissioner (CIC) and Information Commissioners (ICs) (at the central and state level) will hold office for a term of five years.	The Bill removes this provision and states that the central government will notify the term of office for the CIC and the ICs.

<p>Quantum of Salary</p>	<p>The salary of the CIC and ICs (at the central level) will be equivalent to the salary paid to the Chief Election Commissioner and Election Commissioners, respectively.</p> <p>Similarly, the salary of the CIC and ICs (at the state level) will be equivalent to the salary paid to the Election Commissioners and the Chief Secretary to the state government, respectively.</p>	<p>The Bill removes these provisions and states that the salaries, allowances, and other terms and conditions of service of the central and state CIC and ICs will be determined by the central government</p>
<p>Deductions in Salary</p>	<p>The Act states that at the time of the appointment of the CIC and ICs (at the central and state level), if they are receiving pension or any other retirement benefits for previous government service, their salaries will be reduced by an amount equal to the pension.</p> <p>Previous government service includes service under: (i) the central government, (ii) state government, (iii) corporation established under a central or state law, and (iv) company owned or controlled by the central or state government.</p>	<p>The Bill removes these provisions.</p>

- RTI Act, 2005 mentions that the Public Authorities are required to make disclosures on various aspects of their structure and functioning. This includes:

1. Disclosure on their organisation, functions, and structure
2. Powers and duties of its officers and employees, and
3. Financial information.

- The intent of such suo moto disclosures is that the public should need minimum recourse through the Act to obtain such information.
- The act also states that If such information is not made available, citizens have the right to request for it from the Authorities. This may include information in the form of documents, files, or electronic records under the control of the Public Authority. The intent behind the enactment of the Act is to promote transparency and accountability in the working of Public Authorities.