

Pakistan Information Commission

Government of Pakistan

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Appel # 560
RTI # 474

In the Pakistan Information Commission, Islamabad

Appeal No 987-04/21

Pervez Said

(Appellant)

Vs.

Ministry of Education and Professional Training
Through its Public Information Officer

(Respondent)

ORDER

Date: August 03, 2021

Zahid Abdullah: Information Commissioner

A. The Appeal

1. The Appellant filed Appeal on April 09, 2021, to the Commission, stating that he had submitted information requests to the Secretary, Ministry of Education and Professional Training on December 09, under the Right of Access to Information Act 2017 but did not receive any response from the public body.

2. The information sought by the Appellant is as follows:

“How many students between the ages of 5 and 16 are currently enrolled in school nationwide? What is the percentage of students who have been forced to drop out of school due to inaccessibility to internet services and devices?”

What measures is the federal government taking to build the digital divide for school going children to ensure their education is not disrupted?

What measures is federal government taking to ensure that school age children continue to receive an education during the Covid-19 pandemic?

What measures is federal government taking to ensure that public school teachers receive the requisite training in order to be able to teach effectively during the pandemic?”

B. Proceedings

3. Through a notice dated April 20, 2021, sent to Public Information Officer, Ministry of Education and Professional Training, the Commission stated that “Under Section 14 of the Right of Access to Information Act 2017, each federal public body is bound to respond to a request as soon as possible and in any case within ten working days of receipt of the request. You are directed to provide reasons in writing within 7 working days of the receipt of this notice as to why the requested information has not been provided to the applicant, (copy of the information request and appeal thereon enclosed)”.

4. The commission sent hearing notice on June 10, 2021 for the hearing to be held on July 08, 2021 but the PIO did not attend the hearing.

C. Discussion and Commission's View on Relevant Issues

5. This commission takes strong exception to the fact that the Respondent has failed to respond to the duly sent notices of this commission. If directions of the commission in this Order are not followed, it will be left with no option but to invoke Section 20 (f) of the Right of Access to Information Act 2017.
6. This commission is of the view that information about the total number of students between the ages of 5 and 16 currently enrolled in school nationwide, percentage of students who have been forced to drop out of school due to inaccessibility to internet services and devices, measures taken by the federal government to build the digital divide for school going children to ensure their education is not disrupted, measures taken by the federal government to ensure that school age children continue to receive education during the Covid-19 pandemic and measures taken by federal government to ensure that public school teachers receive the requisite training in order to be able to teach effectively during the pandemic is public information under the Right of Access to Information Act 2017 and should have been provided to the Appellant upon his request.
7. This commission takes strong exception to the fact that the Respondent has failed to respond to the duly sent notices of this commission. If directions of the commission in this Order are not followed, it will be left with no option but to invoke Section 20 (f) of the Right of Access to Information Act 2017.
8. This commission is of the view that trust of citizens in public institutions is irrevocably linked with timely and accurate flow of information between citizens and public institutions.

D. Order

9. Appeal is allowed. Public Information Officer, Ministry of Education and Professional Training is directed to provide the requested information mentioned in para 2 of this Order to the Appellant at the earliest but not later than 7 working days of the receipt of this Order, with intimation to this office.
10. Copies of this order be sent to Public Information Officer, Ministry of Education and Professional Training and the Appellant for information and necessary action.


Mohammad Azam

Chief Information Commissioner


Fawad Malik

Information Commissioner


Zahid Abdullah

Information Commissioner

Announced on:

August 03, 2021

This order consists of 2 (two) pages, each page has been read and signed

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Islamabad