BLOGS

Multiple Choice Questions the on Right to Information (RTI) Act

Ruchika Mohapatra · 06 Jul 2025

1. Which of the following scenarios represents the most accurate application of Section 8(1)(a) of the RTI Act, concerning information affecting the sovereignty, integrity, security, or strategic interests of India?

a) A request for the menu of a government-run canteen in a military establishment.

b) A request seeking the number of soldiers deployed in a specific border region, along with their weaponry details.

c) A request for the names of all applicants who have applied for a passport in the last year.

d) A request for the travel itinerary of a government minister on an official tour.

Correct Answer: b) A request seeking the number of soldiers deployed in a specific border region, along with their weaponry details.

Explanation: Section 8(1)(a) of the RTI Act exempts from disclosure information, disclosure of which would prejudicially affect the sovereignty and integrity of India, the security, strategic, scientific, or economic interests of the State, relation with foreign State or lead to incitement of an offence. Disclosing the specific number of soldiers and their weaponry details in a border region directly impacts national security and strategic interests, thus falling under this exemption. The other options do not pose such a direct threat.

2. Under which circumstance can a Public Information Officer (PIO) deny information related to personal information, as per Section 8(1)(j) of the RTI Act, even if it is not related to any public activity or interest?

a) If the information is sought by a close relative of the individual to whom the information pertains.

b) If the PIO believes the disclosure of such information would cause unwarranted invasion of the privacy of the individual, and there is no overriding public interest in its disclosure.

c) If the information is readily available in public databases.

d) If the information is related to the individual's professional activities.

Correct Answer: b) If the PIO believes the disclosure of such information would cause unwarranted invasion of the privacy of the individual, and there is no overriding public interest in its disclosure.

Explanation: Section 8(1)(j) exempts information which relates to personal information the disclosure of which has no relationship to any public activity or interest, or which would cause an unwarranted invasion of the privacy of the individual unless the Central Public Information Officer or 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. The key is the balance between privacy and public interest. Even personal information can be disclosed if a larger public interest is served.

3. According to the RTI Act, what is the prescribed time limit for a PIO to provide information concerning the life or liberty of a person?

a) 48 hours from the receipt of the request.

b) 24 hours from the receipt of the request.

c) 72 hours from the receipt of the request.

d) There is no specific time limit for such cases.

Correct Answer: a) 48 hours from the receipt of the request.

Explanation: Section 7(1) of the RTI Act stipulates that if the information sought concerns the life or liberty of a person, it shall be provided within forty-eight hours of the receipt of the request. This expedited timeline underscores the urgency associated with matters of life and liberty.

4. In the event that a PIO fails to respond to an RTI application within the stipulated time frame, what is the legal consequence as per the RTI Act?

a) The applicant has no recourse.

b) The PIO is automatically fined ₹25,000.

c) The application is deemed to have been refused, and the applicant can file an appeal.

d) The PIO is suspended from their duties.

Correct Answer: c) The application is deemed to have been refused, and the applicant can file an appeal.

Explanation: As per Section 7(5) of the RTI Act, where a PIO fails to give a decision on the request for information within the period specified, the PIO shall be deemed to have refused the request. This deemed refusal allows the applicant to pursue the matter further by filing an appeal to the First Appellate Authority.

5. Which of the following bodies is *not* exempt from the purview of the RTI Act, as per the Second Schedule, even concerning information related to intelligence and security organizations?

a) Special Protection Group

b) Border Security Force

c) Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) – concerning corruption and human rights violations.

d) Research and Analysis Wing (RAW)

Correct Answer: c) Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) – concerning corruption and human rights violations.

Explanation: While many intelligence and security organizations are listed in the Second Schedule of the RTI Act as being generally exempt from the Act's provisions, this exemption does not apply when the information requested pertains to allegations of corruption and human rights violations. The CBI, even though it is listed in the Second Schedule, is obligated to provide information related to these specific allegations, reflecting a commitment to transparency in matters of public concern.

6. What is the maximum penalty that can be imposed on a PIO by the Information Commission under the RTI Act for unwarranted delay or denial of information?

a) ₹10,000

b) ₹25,000

c) ₹50,000

d) ₹1,00,000

Correct Answer: b) ₹25,000

Explanation: Section 20(1) of the RTI Act provides that where the Central Information Commission or the State Information Commission, at the time of deciding any complaint or appeal is of the opinion that the Central Public Information Officer or the State Public Information Officer, as the case may be, has, without any reasonable cause, refused to receive an application for information or has not furnished information within the time specified or malafidely denied the request for information or knowingly given incorrect, incomplete or misleading information or destroyed information which was the subject of the request or obstructed in any manner in furnishing the information, it shall impose a penalty of two hundred and fifty rupees each day till application is received or information is furnished, so however, the total amount of such penalty shall not exceed twenty-five thousand rupees.

7. Which of the following statements accurately reflects the powers and functions of the Information Commission under the RTI Act?

a) The Information Commission can only recommend actions to the government but cannot enforce compliance.

b) The Information Commission has the power to receive and inquire into complaints, direct the PIO to provide information, impose penalties, and recommend disciplinary action against erring officials.

c) The Information Commission's powers are limited to providing advisory opinions on RTI matters.

d) The Information Commission can only address complaints related to the denial of information but not delays in providing information.

Correct Answer: b) The Information Commission has the power to receive and inquire into complaints, direct the PIO to provide information, impose penalties, and recommend disciplinary action against erring officials.

Explanation: The Information Commission is a powerful body established under the RTI Act. It has broad powers to ensure compliance with the Act, including the power to:

- Receive and inquire into complaints
- Direct the PIO to provide information

- Impose penalties for unwarranted delays or denials
- Recommend disciplinary action against erring officials

These powers enable the Information Commission to effectively enforce the provisions of the RTI Act.

8. How does the RTI Act balance the need for transparency with the protection of trade secrets and intellectual property?

a) The RTI Act provides no protection for trade secrets or intellectual property.

b) The RTI Act allows disclosure of trade secrets and intellectual property only with the consent of the owner.

c) Section 8(1)(d) of the RTI Act exempts from disclosure information, including commercial confidence, trade secrets, or intellectual property, the disclosure of which would likely harm the competitive position of a third party, unless the competent authority is satisfied that larger public interest warrants the disclosure of such information.

d) The RTI Act mandates the disclosure of all trade secrets and intellectual property to promote innovation.

Correct Answer: c) Section 8(1)(d) of the RTI Act exempts from disclosure information, including commercial confidence, trade secrets, or intellectual property, the disclosure of which would likely harm the competitive position of a third party, unless the competent authority is satisfied that larger public interest warrants the disclosure of such information.

Explanation: Section 8(1)(d) strikes a balance by protecting trade secrets and intellectual property while allowing for disclosure if a larger public interest is served. This provision recognizes the importance of protecting competitive advantages while ensuring that transparency is not completely compromised.

9. What is the role of the “appropriate government” under the RTI Act in relation to public authorities?

a) The “appropriate government” has no role under the RTI Act.

b) The “appropriate government” is responsible for appointing PIOs and appellate authorities in all public authorities.

c) The “appropriate government” means the Central Government or a State Government, and it is responsible for overseeing the implementation of the RTI Act within public authorities under its jurisdiction, including issuing guidelines and rules.

d) The “appropriate government” is only responsible for providing financial support for the implementation of the RTI Act.

Correct Answer: c) The “appropriate government” means the Central Government or a State Government, and it is responsible for overseeing the implementation of the RTI Act within public authorities under its jurisdiction, including issuing guidelines and rules.

Explanation: The “appropriate government” is a key term under the RTI Act, referring to either the Central Government or a State Government, depending on the public authority in question. The appropriate government plays a crucial role in overseeing the implementation of the RTI Act, ensuring that public authorities comply with its provisions, and issuing necessary guidelines and rules to facilitate its effective operation.

10. In what circumstances can the Central Information Commission or State Information Commission direct a public authority to compensate the complainant under the RTI Act?

a) The Information Commission cannot direct a public authority to compensate the complainant under any circumstances.

b) The Information Commission can only direct compensation if the complainant has suffered financial loss due to the denial of information.

c) The Information Commission can direct a public authority to compensate the complainant for any loss or other detriment suffered as a result of the actions of the public authority, including denial of information, delay, or providing misleading information.

d) The Information Commission can only recommend compensation to the government, but the final decision rests with the public authority.

Correct Answer: c) The Information Commission can direct a public authority to compensate the complainant for any loss or other detriment suffered as a result of the actions of the public authority, including denial of information, delay, or providing misleading information.

Explanation: As per Section 19(8)(b), the Central Information Commission or State Information Commission has the power to require the public authority to compensate the complainant for any loss or other detriment suffered. This power ensures that individuals are not only provided with

the requested information but are also compensated for any harm they may have suffered due to the wrongful actions of the public authority.