

The Times of Indian    17.08.2009

## MC lax towards the RTI Act

Manvinder Singh, TNN 16 August 2009, 11:14pm IST

LUDHIANA: Though strict actions had been taken many a time against the Municipal Corporation (MC) officers due to there callous attitude towards giving the information under the Right to Information (RTI) act but they continue to defy the law as more then 60% of the total applications received by them ever since the inception of the act have not been replied yet.

This is contrary to the fact that two of its senior officers Joint Commissioner Mahinder Pal Gupta and Assistant Commissioner VK Sharda had tendered written unconditional apology from the State Information Commission. The information attained by the RTI activist Rohit Sabharwal the President of the Anti Corruption and crime investigation cell in this regard from the MC presents the grim picture of the havoc created by the civic body officers with the act that aims in empowering the general masses. Just look at this fact since the implementation of act from February 2nd, 2006 to March 31st, 2007 the civic body received 682 applications under the act out of which only 281 have been answered by it but 401 out of them are lying pending with it.

Similarly from April 1st, 2007 to March 31st, 2008 the MC received 963 applications under the act out of which 452 are

lying pending with the civic body. But the civic body created the mess in the last year as April 1st, 2008 to March 31st, 2009 it received 1143 application sunder the act out of which only 353 have been answered and a whopping figure of 790 applications are still pending with it. In the same manner from April 1st 2009 till July 30th, 2009 the MC has received 310 applications out of which 184 are pending.

Talking to the TOI Sabharwal said that the present state of affairs as exposed by this information is only reflective of the chaotic state of affairs in the department. He said that all of this is despite the fact that the Punjab State Information Commission has penalized the MC officials more than two dozen times and has also directed disciplinary action under the Punjab Government Service Rules against their top brass. Sabharwal said that the basic intention of the MC officers behind denying information under the act is that their misdeeds should not come out in open to the public.