

Challenges in Information Commissions

Why in News?

Recently, the Supreme Court (SC) slammed the delay shown by the Centre and States in appointing Information Commissioners.

- **Issues in CIC** - Central Information Commission (CIC) has 8 vacancies in the posts of the Information Commissioners.
- It has 23,000 pending appeals filed by citizens seeking information from various government departments.
- **Issues in State IC** - Several Information Commissions in States have been defunct since 2020.

In Jharkhand, the lack of a Leader of Opposition (LoP) in the Vidhan Sabha was delaying appointments to the State Information Commission, which had been lying defunct since 2020 with over 8,000 appeals pending.

*For State Information Commission, the **Appointments Committee** will be headed by the Chief Minister. Other members include the Leader of the Opposition in the Legislative Assembly and one Cabinet Minister nominated by the Chief Minister.*

- Some have stopped accepting petitions under the Right to Information (RTI) Act.
- **Supreme Court Direction** - It directed the Department of Personnel and Training to file an affidavit in 2 weeks specifying timelines
 - For completion of the selection process
 - For the selection committee to finalise its recommendations
 - For the notification of the appointments of the 8 Information Commissioners to the CIC.
- It also directed them to disclose the constitution of the search committee & a list of the candidates who had applied for the posts.

Central Information Commission

- It is a **statutory authority**.
- **Established in** - 2005, under Section-12 of RTI Act of 2005.
- **Objectives**
 - To receive and inquire into complaints from any person.
 - To receive and decide upon the 2nd appeals from any citizen.
 - To perform the duty of Monitoring and Reporting.

Organizational Structure	
Composition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consists of Chief Information Commissioner • <i>Not more than 10</i> Information Commissioner
Appointment by	President
Selection Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chaired by - Prime Minister. • Other members - Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha, or if there is no such leader, then the leader of the single largest opposition group in the Lok Sabha. • A Union Cabinet Minister nominated by PM.
Eligibility criteria	Eminent person in public life with wide knowledge and experience in <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Law, science and technology, social service, management, journalism, mass media, administration and governance.

- **Powers** - It has the *same powers vested in a civil court* while trying a suit under the Code of Civil Procedure, 1908.

References

1. [The Hindu| Challenges in Information Commissions](#)
2. [CIC| Central Information Commission \(CIC\)](#)

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