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	• Consists of Chief Information Commissioner • *Not more than 10* Information Commissioner
Appointment by	President
Selection Committee	• 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 • 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)

Related News

RTI and Information Commissions

SHANKAR IAS PARLIAMENT
Information is Empowering