



Preliminary Analysis of RTI applications - Municipal Corporation of Delhi

Since the enactment of the Right to Information Act (RTI Act) in 2005, thousands of RTI applications have been filed with public authorities at the village, block, district, state and central government level. According to a recent study by the Right to Information Assessment and Analysis Group (RaaG), an estimated 2 million RTI applications were filed in the first three years of the RTI Act (RaaG, 2008). Despite the volume of information requests, there has been very little analysis of how the RTI Act is being used, what kinds of questions are being asked and what information people are interested in. To get a sense of this, the Accountability Initiative has initiated a study to analyse RTI applications filed with the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD). The objective of this analysis is to help determine the kind of information the MCD and potentially other departments should be publishing proactively under Section 4 of the RTI Act. The findings of this analysis will be fed back to the Central Information Commission (CIC) and the MCD with a view to help them and other departments prioritise their information disclosure. So far, we have been able to analyse a 100 RTI applications filed with the MCD. A preliminary analysis of these applications reveals that certain types of information are frequently sought by applicants. We have broadly classified the information requested into the following categories:

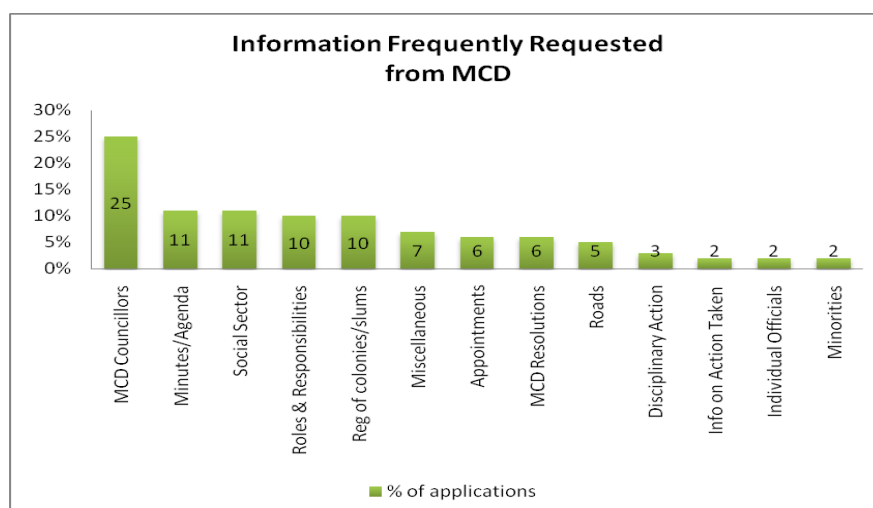
1. **MCD Councillors:** Requests for information on the roles and responsibilities of MCD Councillors, their income statements, yearly budgets, staff, salaries, perks and details of foreign travel.
2. **Roles and responsibilities of MCD officials:** Requests for information on the roles, responsibilities and jurisdiction of MCD officials.
3. **Minutes of Meeting/Agenda:** Requests for copies of the agenda, minutes of meetings and orders of various MCD committees including Standing Committees, Ward Committees etc.
4. **MCD Resolutions:** Requests for copies of various MCD Resolutions.
5. **Social Sector:** Requests for information on social sector issues such as pensions, BPL cards, primary schools etc.
6. **Regularisation of colonies, unauthorized colonies and slums:** Requests for copies of notifications, resolutions, plans for regularisation of different colonies (authorised and unauthorized), slum and squatter settlements.

7. **Renaming of roads:** Requests for information on the renaming of particular roads or chowks – reasons and grounds for the decision to change the name.
8. **Appointment of MCD officials:** Information on the appointment procedures for MCD officials and consultants as well as reasons for appointment of particular individuals.
9. **Action Taken:** Requests that seek information on action taken on previous letters/petitions.
10. **Disciplinary Action:** Requests for information on disciplinary action taken against particular officials.
11. **Individual Officials:** Requests that seek information on a specific MCD official for example i.e. details of their work zone, issues raised by them in meetings etc.
12. **Minorities:** Requests for information related to the issues of minority groups.
13. **Miscellaneous:** Requests for a wide variety of information including information on properties maintained by the MCD, procedures for setting up of statues etc.

Key Findings:

- **25%** of RTI applications sought information about MCD Councillors'. Interestingly, there were quite a few questions about laptops given to MCD Councillors' i.e. how many had been given out and whether Councillors' returned the laptops when their terms were over;
- **11%** of RTI applications were for copies of the agenda, minutes of meeting of various Standing Committees of the MCD.

Figure 1.



- **11%** of the applications were related to social sector issues including information on pensions, BPL cards, toilets.
- **10%** of applications sought general information on the roles, responsibilities and jurisdiction of various MCD officials and committees. This included specific requests for information on the Commissioner, Mayor and Leader of House of the MCD, MCD Councillors and Chairman of the Standing Committee.
- **10%** of RTI applications were requests for information on the regularization of colonies, slums and squatter settlements;
- **7%** of the applications sought miscellaneous information on a range of issues;
- **6%** of applications related to appointments of MCD officials and **6%** also for requests for copies of MCD resolutions;
- **5%** were related to the renaming of various roads and chowks and reasons for the same;
- **3%** of the requests were for information on the disciplinary action taken against particular officials;
- Requests for information on a) action taken, b) individual MCD officials and c) minorities each accounted for **2%** of applications.

From our preliminary analysis it is evident that a lot of the information frequently requested (i.e. roles and responsibilities of MCD officials and Councillors, requests for copies of meeting minutes and resolutions and information related to various social sector schemes) is covered under Section 4 of the RTI Act. This is information the MCD should be routinely publishing on its website and through other means. We are currently working to expand the sample size of our analysis to include more RTI applications filed with the MCD. The Central Information Commission has agreed to provide us with access to copies of RTI appeals and complaints related to the MCD for this purpose.

For more information contact

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