

Central Information Commission – UPSC Notes

The Central Information Commission is an important authority in India needed for the smooth functioning of democracy and good governance.

The Chief Information Commission (CIC) is the authorised body in India to act upon complaints received from individuals who have been unable to submit requests of information to a Central or State Public Information Officer due to either the officer not having been appointed, or the respective officer refused to entertain the application under the Right to Information Act (RTI Act).

The CIC was constituted with effect from 12th October 2005 under the RTI Act 2005. Its jurisdiction extends upon all central public authorities.

Central Information Commission Composition

The CIC is headed by the Chief Information Commissioner. He/she is assisted by ten Information Commissioners. The Chief Information Commissioner holds the office for five years.

The commissioners are appointed by the President of India on the recommendation of a committee comprising of: Prime Minister (Chairperson), Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha, and a Union Cabinet Minister nominated by the PM.

Role of the Central Information Commission

1. Order enquiry into any matter on reasonable grounds only.
2. Secure compliance of its decisions from any public authority.
3. Receive and inquire into a complaint from any person:
 - Who has not received any response to his request for information within a specified time
 - Who deems the information given to him/her incomplete, false or misleading, and any other matter related to securing the information
 - Who has been unable to submit a request for information due to the non-appointment of an officer
 - Who considers the fees so charged unreasonable
 - Who was refused the information requested
4. The commission has the power to examine any record under the control of the public authority. All such records have to be given to the Commission during the examination and nothing shall be withheld.
5. During inquiries, the CIC has the powers of a civil court, such as the powers to:
 - Summon and enforce the attendance of persons, and compel them to give oral or written evidence on oath and produce documents or things
 - Require the discovery and inspection of documents
 - Receive evidence on affidavit
 - Requisition public records or copies from any office or court
 - Issue summons for the examination of documents or witnesses
 - Any other matter that may be prescribed
6. The CIC also submits an annual report to the GOI on the implementations of the provisions of the Act. This report is then placed before both the Houses of Parliament.

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