

West Bengal

1. STATE FACTSHEET

State Chief Information Commissioner	Arun Kumar Bhattacharya
Total Number of Cases Analysed by Us (as provided to us)	102
Pendency as on January 1, 2008	237
Pendency as on December 31, 2008	856
Time Taken Between Filing of Appeal and First Hearing	6 months
Total Funds Spent by the Commission (FY 2008-09)	Not Available

2. STATE OF RECORDS:

In our first interaction, West Bengal information commission seemed confused about the number of orders passed in the year 2008, claiming in a letter that it allowed 966 appeals and also stating in the same letter that it disposed 112 cases that had been posted on its website. We found only 102 orders on their website.

To our subsequent RTI application, they said they had passed orders in 355 complaints and appeals in the year 2008. Our efforts to get a clarification drew a blank. We have, therefore, analyzed only 102 orders of West Bengal information commission.

3. PERFORMANCE OF INFORMATION COMMISSION ON VARIOUS PARAMETERS

a) DISPOSALS: An average of 9 cases per commissioner per month

- Arun Kumar Bhattacharya, the chief of the commission and the only commissioner, had a pendency of 856 by the end of the year 2008.

b) PRO-DISCLOSURE FACTOR: ~76%

Rank: 63

Total Number of Orders Analysed	102
Orders in Favour of Disclosure	78 (~76%)
Orders in which information was partly or fully denied	24 (24%)
Remanded Back	0
Rank	63

c) EFFECTIVENESS: 20 to 30%

- Only 20 to 30% of the pro-disclosure orders were complied with.
- Compliance is below national average of 30 to 40%, and much less than the best (90 to 100%).

d) DETERRENCE IMPACT: 3.8%

Rank: 20

- Number of cases in which show-cause notices issued: 12
- Penalty was imposed in 3 cases (i.e. 1% of pro-disclosure cases).
- Show cause notices remained pending in 9 cases at the end of the year, i.e. 75% cases.

The Commission passed 78 pro-disclosure orders, which means that the information had not been provided within the prescribed time. However, the Commission asked PIOs for reasons of delay only in 12 cases.

e) OVERALL PUBLIC SATISFACTION (OPS): 10 to 20%

If 100 people approached West Bengal Information Commission, pro-disclosure orders were passed in 76 cases. Out of these only 10 to 20 people finally got the information requested.

4. GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

- West Bengal information commission has the dubious distinction of disposing of 27% of the cases received without holding any hearing.