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1. INTRODUCTION

“Democracy requires an informed citizenry and transparency of information which are vital to its functioning and also to contain corruption and to hold Governments and their instrumentalities accountable to the governed.”

The Right to Information Act, 2005, enacted on 15th June 2005, is a landmark in India’s administrative history. It confers upon citizens the statutory right to access information under the control of public authorities, thereby enabling greater transparency and accountability in governance. The RTI Act is widely regarded as one of the most transformative, reformative, and participatory laws ever introduced in the Indian democratic framework.

The RTI framework operates through two core dimensions:

- Demand Side: This refers to the active filing of RTI applications by citizens seeking information. It includes the right to file First and Second Appeals in case the requested information is not furnished satisfactorily or within the stipulated time. This component is well-utilized and widely recognized across all sectors of governance.
- Supply Side: Equally important, this dimension involves suo motu (voluntary) disclosure of information by public authorities without waiting for specific requests. Section 4 of the RTI Act mandates such disclosures, particularly through electronic means, with official websites serving as primary platforms. This proactive dissemination is intended to minimize the need for RTI applications by making key information readily accessible.

Section 4 of the RTI Act elaborately outlines the obligations of public authorities under the supply side of information management. It prescribes the disclosure of organizational details, decision-making procedures, financial allocations, staff directories, and more. These disclosures are intended to:

Enable citizens to access important information without filing individual RTI requests, and Promote transparency, accountability, and participatory governance across public institutions.

In recognition of the need to strengthen this supply side, the Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT), Government of India, issued an Office Memorandum dated 15th April 2013, directing all public authorities to undertake regular third-party audits of their mandatory disclosures under Section 4 of the RTI Act.

The objective of such audits is twofold:

- To assess the extent, quality, and regularity of voluntary disclosures made by departments; and
- To identify gaps and recommend improvements in transparency practices for enhanced citizen engagement.

In compliance with these directives, the Manipur Information Commission, under the guidance of the Central Information Commission, has directed all state departments to institutionalize the

process of proactive disclosure and to undertake third-party audits of the information published on their respective official websites.

Accordingly, the Public Health Engineering Department (PHED), Government of Manipur, undertook the present Third-Party Audit of Proactive Disclosure as per Section 4 of the RTI Act. PHED is a crucial department tasked with ensuring equitable access to safe drinking water and rural sanitation infrastructure across the state. It implements flagship national and state schemes such as Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM), Swachh Bharat Mission (Grameen), and urban sanitation projects, and engages with communities through its field-level offices across all districts.

The audit was carried out on the Department, after carefully examining the Departments Website <https://www.phedmanipur.gov.in>, and multiple documents submitted by the Department (including the Suo Motu Disclosure and multiple Administrative Reports). It was mandated to assess the completeness, timeliness, and accessibility of disclosures made on the public platform.

This report presents the findings of the audit conducted from 24th to 25th March 2025 and aims to serve as a strategic tool for enhancing proactive transparency and strengthening public trust in PHED's governance.

2. EXTRACTS OF SECTION 4 OF THE RIGHT TO INFORMATION ACT, 2005

Section 4 of the Right to Information Act, 2005 lays down the statutory obligations of every public authority to ensure proactive and suo motu disclosure of information to the public. This section forms the cornerstone of **supply-side transparency**, wherein information is disseminated voluntarily, without requiring citizens to file specific RTI applications.

The key provisions of **Section 4** are outlined below:

4(1)(a): Maintenance and Cataloguing of Records

Every public authority shall:

- Maintain all its records **duly catalogued and indexed**;
- Ensure that such records are **computerised** within a reasonable time and linked through networks across the country to facilitate easy access.

This provision establishes the responsibility of digitising records and structuring them in a manner conducive to public access.

4(1)(b): Mandatory Suo Motu Disclosures

Public authorities are required to **publish within 120 days** from the enactment of the Act, and **update annually**, the following categories of information:

1. **Particulars of the organisation, functions and duties**
2. **Powers and duties of officers and employees**
3. **Decision-making procedures**, including supervisory channels
4. **Norms for discharge of functions**
5. **Rules, regulations, manuals and records** used in discharging functions
6. **Categories of documents** held under its control
7. **Arrangements for consultation** with or representation by the public in policy formulation or implementation
8. **Details of boards, councils or committees** formed for advice, including public access to minutes
9. **Directory of officers and employees**
10. **Monthly remuneration** of officers and employees and system of compensation
11. **Budget allocation** and disbursement plans of each agency under it
12. **Execution of subsidy programmes**, including allocations and beneficiaries
13. **Recipients of concessions, permits or authorisations**
14. **Information available in electronic form**
15. **Facilities available for obtaining information**, including working hours of reading rooms/libraries

16. Names and contact details of Public Information Officers (PIOs)

17. Any other information as may be prescribed

These 17 points form the backbone of proactive transparency obligations and provide a comprehensive framework to structure information on public platforms, especially departmental websites.

4(1)(c): Publication of Relevant Facts

Public authorities must **publish all relevant facts** while formulating important policies or announcing decisions affecting the public.

4(1)(d): Reasons for Decisions

It is mandatory to **provide reasons for administrative and quasi-judicial decisions** to those affected, thereby ensuring fairness and accountability in governance.

4(2): Constant Endeavour for Suo Motu Disclosure

Public authorities shall make **constant efforts** to proactively disseminate information at **regular intervals** through various means of communication, including the internet, to reduce the need for individual RTI applications.

4(3): Wide and Accessible Dissemination

All information must be **widely disseminated** in formats that are **easily accessible** to the general public, enabling effective communication and public awareness.

4(4): Cost-Effective and Localised Access

Information dissemination must take into account:

- **Cost-effectiveness**
- **Local language accessibility**
- **Most effective means of communication** for the local area
- Where feasible, information should be provided in **electronic form**, available free or at a nominal cost.

Explanation: For sub-sections (3) and (4), the term “*disseminated*” includes sharing information through:

- Notice boards
- Newspapers
- Public announcements
- Media broadcasts
- The internet
- Inspection of office records or any other suitable means

Implication for PHED

Section 4 imposes a statutory duty on departments such as PHED to proactively disclose the full range of institutional, procedural, and operational information via its official platform, including progress under schemes like **Jal Jeevan Mission, Swachh Bharat Mission (Grameen)**, and others. Regular updating, accessibility in Manipuri and English, and citizen-friendly navigation are essential to fulfil the spirit and letter of this provision.

3. LIST OF PUBLIC AUTHORITIES OF PUBLIC HEALTH ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT (PHED), GOVERNMENT OF MANIPUR

Sl. No.	Designation	Designated Authority
1)	Secretary (PHE), Govt. of Manipur	FIRST APPELLATE AUTHORITY(FAA)
2)	Additional Chief Engineer, Public Health Engineering Department	Nodal Officer, Suo-Motu disclosure under Section 4 of RTI Act, 2005
3)	Engineer Officer to Chief Engineer, PHED, Manipur	STATE PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER (SPIO)
4)	1) Additional Chief Engineer 2) Superintending Engineer, Rural Circle-I 3) Superintending Engineer, Rural Circle-II 4) Superintending Engineer, Rural Circle-III 5) Superintending Engineer, Planning and Monitoring 6) Superintending Engineer, Urban 7) Executive Engineer, Water Supply Maintenance Division No.I 8) Executive Engineer, Water Supply Maintenance Division No.II 9) Executive Engineer, Water Supply Project Construction Division 10) Executive Engineer, Tamenglong 11) Executive Engineer, Ukhrul 12) Executive Engineer, Senapati 13) Executive Engineer, Churachandpur 14) Executive Engineer, Thoubal 15) Executive Engineer, Store 16) Executive Engineer, Mechanical & Electrical 17) Executive Engineer, Monitoring & Evaluation 18) Executive Engineer, Imphal West 19) Executive Engineer, Imphal East 20) Executive Engineer, Investigation, Planning and Design No.I 21) Executive Engineer, Chandel 22) Executive Engineer, Jiribam 23) Executive Engineer, Bishnupur 24) Executive Engineer, Kangpokpi 25) Executive Engineer, Pherzawl 26) Executive Engineer, Noney 27) Executive Engineer, Tamenglong 28) Executive Engineer, Kamjong 29) Executive Engineer, Kakching	STATE ASSISTANT PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER (SAPIO)
5)	Communication and Capacity Development Unit	Third Party Audit

**4.SELF APPRAISAL OF PUBLIC HEALTH ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT (PHED),
GOVERNMENT OF MANIPUR UNDER RTI ACT, 2005**

Sl. No.	Parameter	<i>Information disclosed in the official website of the Public Health Engineering Department (PHED), Government of Manipur</i>
1.	Organisation and Function	Name and address of the Department, overview of the Department's function, contact details of the Head of the Department, organisational structure (organogram), vision and mission, duties and responsibilities of officers and staff, work allocation, divisional office jurisdiction, and departmental mandates are uploaded. Annual Administrative Reports and committee-related orders (including grievance redressal and internal functioning) are made available upon request or included in annual documentation.
2.	Budget and Programmes	Brief narratives of budget provisions and financial allocations under major schemes such as Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM), Swachh Bharat Mission (Grameen), and externally aided projects like those supported by New Development Bank (NDB) are available. However, efforts are being made to regularly upload sanctioned work lists, work orders, procurement details, and end-to-end e-procurement records. Tender notices are hosted periodically, although not all tender results or award details are updated online.
3.	Publicity and Public Interface	Important Notifications, Recruitment Results, Appointment Offers, and RTI application outcomes are regularly uploaded under the Notice Board section of the website. Public Grievance Redressal mechanisms are operational and accessible through the online portal. RTI-related information such as designated PIOs, Nodal Officer, and First Appellate Authority are listed. Annual Reports of RTI implementation and orders of the Manipur Information Commission (where applicable) are maintained internally. Scheme information for JJM and SBM(G) is presented for public awareness.
4.	E-Governance	The Department has initiated steps toward implementation of the e-Office system. While some workflows and daks are handled electronically, full digitization of file movement is under progress. An online Public Grievance portal is functional and enables citizens to lodge and track complaints. However, other online services like water bill payments, application for new connections, and downloadable service forms are not fully integrated as of now.
5.	Information as may be prescribed	Notifications and Orders issued by the Department are updated in the Notices section. Office address, email ID, and working hours are provided on the Contact Us page. Details about available services (e.g., grievance handling, water billing) are included under respective website tabs. Directory of PIOs across divisions, procedure for filing RTI applications, applicable fee structures, and instructions from the Manipur Information Commission are uploaded for public information. Section 4(1)(b) information is presented across various sections, though not compiled into a single downloadable handbook.

Sl. No.	Parameter	<i>Information disclosed in the official website of the Public Health Engineering Department (PHED), Government of Manipur</i>
6.	Information disclosed on own initiative	PHED has proactively uploaded divisional contact information, list of officers, and details about schemes and grievance mechanisms. Annual Administrative Reports and scheme updates (especially under JJM) are uploaded or referenced regularly. A statement of information under Section 4(2) of the RTI Act has also been prepared and submitted, showcasing the Department's commitment to voluntary transparency. Although not required, water quality awareness content, basic citizen FAQs, and informative videos are planned for future inclusion.

5. METHODOLOGY OF AUDIT

The methodology for conducting the Third-Party Audit of Proactive Disclosure under Section 4 of the RTI Act, 2005 by the Public Health Engineering Department (PHED), Government of Manipur was adopted in line with the guidelines and approach recommended in the report titled “Transparency Audit: Towards an Open and Accountable Government”. This framework provides both conceptual clarity and a practical mechanism for assessing transparency levels across public authorities.

The following steps outline the methodology used in the audit:

i) Design and Use of a Comprehensive Evaluation Format:

A structured format for self-appraisal was designed and shared with PHED. This included all relevant indicators for proactive disclosure as required under Section 4 of the RTI Act. The evaluation was grouped under six main thematic heads with multiple sub-heads under each:

- Organisation and Functions
- Budget and Programmes
- Publicity and Public Interface
- E-Governance and Digitisation
- Information as Prescribed under Section 4(1)(b)
- Information Disclosed on Own Initiative

ii) Assessment of Quantitative and Qualitative Disclosure:

Both the extent (quantitative) and depth (qualitative) of information disclosed were critically evaluated. The official website of the department, <https://www.phedmanipur.gov.in>, served as the primary platform for assessing compliance with mandated disclosures. The Suo Motu Disclosure and Administrative Reports submitted by PHED were also considered during the evaluation process.

iii) Parameter-Based Scoring and Grading:

Based on the predefined parameters and the corresponding weightage assigned to each, the department’s disclosures were assessed and scores were awarded proportionally. The final score out of 100 was used to assign an overall performance grade in proactive transparency.

iv) Identification of Gaps and Areas for Improvement:

The audit exercise helped identify areas where disclosure was incomplete, outdated, or missing entirely. Particular attention was given to areas where information was either partially available or lacking regular updates.

v) Recommendations for Enhancing Proactive Disclosure:

Based on the findings, practical and actionable suggestions were made to improve the Department’s compliance with RTI disclosure norms, ensure regular content updates, and enhance public access to departmental functions, schemes, and services.

vi) Period of Audit:

The Third-Party Audit was conducted from 24th to 25th March 2025, through detailed review of website content, documents provided by PHED, and field-level feedback.

6. THIRD PARTY AUDIT REPORT

Details	Information
Name of Public Authority being Audited	PUBLIC HEALTH ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT (PHED), GOVERNMENT OF MANIPUR
Website	https://www.phedmanipur.gov.in
Nodal Officer, Suo-Motu Disclosure under Section 4 of RTI Act, 2005	Kirankumar Laishram, Additional Chief Engineer, Public Health Engineering Department
Third Party Auditor	Communication and Capacity Development, Manipur

Audit Table

Sl. No.	Parameter	Information disclosed on PHED Website	Remarks by Auditor	Weightage Value	Point Score
1	Organisation and Function	Name and address of the Department, organisational structure, contact details of Head of Department, vision and mission statements, work allocation, jurisdiction of divisional offices, pay structure reference, Annual Administrative Reports uploaded.	Fully complied. Organogram, officer lists, and functions properly disclosed through various sections.	10	10
2	Budget and Programme	Overview of budgetary provisions for key schemes such as Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM), SBM(G), externally aided projects like New Development Bank (NDB). Scheme descriptions available. Tender notices uploaded, though tender results and project-wise financials require improvement.	Almost complied. Tender and financial disclosure needs regular update.	30	26
3	Publicity and Public Interface	Important Notices (Recruitments, Appointments), Grievance Redressal Portal, scheme information, RTI-related contact points disclosed. Annual Administrative Report uploaded.	Almost complied. Information regularly updated but more citizen-friendly interface recommended.	25	22
4	E-Governance	Online Grievance Portal functional. Some use of E-office initiated. Internal workflows partly digitized but online services like water billing not yet launched.	Partially complied. E-Governance efforts visible but expansion required to citizen services.	20	14
5	Information as may be	RTI Officers list, procedure for RTI applications, grievance portal access,	Almost complied. Minor gaps in	10	7

Sl. No.	Parameter	Information disclosed on PHED Website	Remarks by Auditor	Weightage Value	Point Score
	prescribed	notification orders uploaded. Acts & Rules section needs to be populated fully.	regulatory documents and rule uploads.		
6	Information disclosed on own initiatives	Divisional officer contacts, grievance system details, Annual Administrative Reports, Suo Motu disclosures under Section 4(2) uploaded voluntarily. Scheme awareness content needs expansion.	Almost complied. Good initiative but can be improved further with scheme dashboards and public FAQs.	5	5

Total Score (84) and Grade (Very Good)

7. OBSERVATIONS

The assessment of the proactive disclosure by the Public Health Engineering Department (PHED), Government of Manipur indicates that most of the information under the six audited parameters has been disclosed satisfactorily. However, certain areas require further enhancement and regular updates to ensure full compliance with Section 4 of the RTI Act, 2005. The key observations are as follows:

- **Non-Publication of Key Documents:**
Several important documents such as internal guidelines, policy implementation notes, proceedings of departmental reviews, and administrative circulars are not publicly accessible through the Department's website. Unlike the Ministry of Jal Shakti, which maintains a dedicated section for policy documents, advisories, and minutes of review meetings, PHED currently lacks a similar publicly accessible digital repository. Disclosure of such key documents would considerably enhance internal transparency and policy clarity.
- **Details of Official Visits:**
Details of domestic and foreign visits undertaken by senior officials, especially visits relating to externally aided projects, Ministry-level meetings, or technical inspections, are not available online. Disclosure of such travel details with purpose summaries would promote greater accountability.
- **Tender Notices and Award Details:**
Although tender notifications are uploaded periodically, detailed information regarding the results of bidding processes — including names of successful contractors, suppliers of goods or services, and contract award values — is lacking. A dedicated section for bid outcomes and contract execution details would improve financial transparency.
- **Updates on Digitisation Initiatives:**
While the Department has initiated e-Governance processes, periodic updates about the digitization status (such as the e-Office rollout and online service expansion for water billing) are limited. Regular progress reporting would showcase the Department's digital transformation journey.
- **Multilingual Disclosures:**
Presently, most information is available only in English. To widen accessibility, especially in rural Manipur, key information could be made available in the local language (Manipuri).

8. SUGGESTIONS

Based on the observations drawn from the audit, the following suggestions are offered to enhance the quality, comprehensiveness, and accessibility of proactive disclosures made by the Public Health Engineering Department (PHED), Government of Manipur:

- **Disclosure of Official Visits:**
Regularly update the website with details of domestic and foreign visits undertaken by senior officials, including purpose, outcomes, and expenditure details wherever appropriate.
- **Enhancement of Tender and Contract Information:**
Develop a separate section to publish post-tender award details, including names of successful bidders, value of contracts awarded, and brief descriptions of awarded work or services.
- **Publication of Fund Allocation Guidelines:**
Upload comprehensive guidelines relating to the allocation, release, and utilization of funds under major schemes such as Jal Jeevan Mission, Swachh Bharat Mission (Grameen), and projects funded by external agencies like the New Development Bank.
- **Strengthening of Digitisation Efforts:**
Expedite the full-scale implementation of the e-Office system. Develop citizen-friendly digital services such as online applications for new water connections, online payment of water bills, and tracking of service requests.
- **Regular Updating of Suo Motu Disclosures:**
Ensure that all mandatory disclosures under Section 4(1)(b) are reviewed and updated at least quarterly. Information such as PIO directories, scheme progress reports, and public grievance redress statistics should be made dynamic and current.
- **Multilingual Access:**
Introduce key content in Manipuri alongside English to ensure wider reach among rural populations and to promote inclusivity in information dissemination.
- **Enhanced Public Grievance Reporting:**
Apart from providing an online grievance portal, a monthly or quarterly summary of grievance cases received, resolved, and pending may be uploaded to build trust in the Department's responsiveness.
- **Creation of Citizen's Charter:**
Develop and upload a Citizen's Charter outlining the Department's service standards, citizen entitlements, timelines for service delivery, and contact points for grievance redress.
- **Institutionalisation of Annual Audits:**
Establish an institutional mechanism for conducting an annual third-party audit of suo motu disclosures and publishing the audit report publicly to encourage continuous improvement.

9. CONCLUSION

The Public Health Engineering Department (PHED), Government of Manipur has demonstrated significant commitment to the spirit of the Right to Information Act, 2005 by ensuring structured and substantial proactive disclosure of departmental information.

Through the Department's official website, key organisational, functional, and programme-related information has been made available to the public. Public grievance redress mechanisms have been operationalised, and awareness regarding major schemes such as Jal Jeevan Mission and Swachh Bharat Mission (Grameen) has been enhanced.

The Department has secured a **Total Score of 84/100** in this third-party audit, placing it in the "**Very Good**" category of compliance. This reflects a robust transparency mechanism but also indicates areas where proactive disclosures can be further strengthened.

In particular, expanding digital governance capabilities, publishing tender and contract execution details, improving accessibility through local language translations, and dynamically updating scheme-related information will elevate the Department's transparency practices to even greater heights.

By adopting the recommendations outlined in this report and institutionalizing regular reviews, the Public Health Engineering Department can serve as a model of participatory governance and citizen-centric service delivery in Manipur.