

### **Voluminous information:**

A petitioner had filed a series of applications under RTI Act asking for information from revenue authorities about Registers maintained under Estates Land Act and Estate Abolition and Conversion into Ryotwari Act, Pimash Registers, names and other details of estate holders in two districts, dating back to pre-Independence days. The information was not furnished by the public authority as the material sought was excessive and steps to furnish this voluminous information would affect regular functioning of the office. The petitioner was told that he could ask for minimum required information. The petitioner filed four writ petitions impleading the Commission and the public authority. After hearing arguments from all sides, Hon'ble Mr Justice S. Nagamuthu observed in an order dated 7.7.2014 as follows: "The object of the Right to Information Act is salutary and the same serves the avowed object of transparency in public offices. At the same time, the said Act should not be allowed to be abused or misused by any unscrupulous parties. For example, suppose an information relating to several decades, running to several pages, is sought for, the Public Information Officer may have to depute several persons to collect those particulars and then to count the pages and calculate the fee to be paid by the party concerned. All these exercises should be done at the cost of Rs.10/- paid by the applicant. After that, the applicant should be informed by the Public Information Officer to pay the required amount. For example, suppose the Public Information Officer directs the applicant to pay a sum of Rs.5,00,000/-, the applicant may not pay the amount, in which case the entire exercise done in collecting the information, running to several pages, relating to several decades, would be a wasteful exercise. Assuming that the applicant is prepared to pay the money thereafter, the entire office machinery should be focused only in preparing the copies of the documents and furnishing the same to the applicant, leaving behind the regular work the office." Pointing out that the Hon'ble Supreme Court had also disapproved of indiscriminate demands and impractical directions for disclosure of all and sundry information unrelated to transparency and accountability and eradication of corruption, the Hon'ble High Court dismissed the writ petitions, upholding orders rejecting the requests of the petitioner. (WP (MD) No 13874/2009 etc- SIC cases 9964/R4/2009, etc).