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Centre for Peace and  
Development Initiatives

## Survey Report

### Requirement for an Access to Information Law in Punjab

September, 2012

CPDI is a member organization of Free and Fair Election Network (FAFEN)

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Centre for Peace and Development Initiatives (CPDI) would welcome reproduction and dissemination of the contents of the report with due acknowledgments.

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Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the contents of this publication. The organization does not accept any responsibility of any omission as it is not deliberate. Nevertheless, we will appreciate provision of accurate information to improve our work.

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## Acknowledgements

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CPDI acknowledges and appreciates the efforts of all the colleagues.

## Executive Summary

Right to information is recognized as a pivotal feature of democratic societies around the world. Absence of a Right to Information legislation in Punjab is, nevertheless, both a farce and a tragedy for the most populous province. CPDI has been advocating for the enactment of a Right to Information legislation in Punjab since long. This study is intended to provide empirical evidence to the efforts of CPDI through taking the voice of Citizens into account.

A survey was conducted in six districts of the Punjab province, namely, Rawalpindi, Jehlum, Sargodha, Khushab, Jhang and Toba Tek Singh to assess the requirement of an access to information legislation in Punjab. In total 1200 respondents were surveyed out of which 11.3% were females and 88.7% were males. The respondents belonged to different professions, majority owning their own business, and more than half of them were below 30 years of age. When inquired on whether if it was possible or not to gain information from the government departments in Punjab, only 36.27% said that it was possible to access information. Approximately 65% of the respondents found it difficult or very difficult to gain information when gauged on level of difficulty in accessing information. A majority i.e. 57.48% identified written requests as the correct way to gain access to information while 25.6% reported oral requests as the means of doing so. 28.57% of the respondents reported that either they or their family members have had the requirement to gain access to government held information. Out of those who reported the requirement of having to access information from the government departments, 68.24% said that they could gain access to information. However, when inquired about the means employed to have access to information held by Punjab public bodies, 39% identified that having links is important to gain access, 34.7% recognized bribe paying as the means of getting information and only 10.2% said that neither links nor bribing is required. 41.79% of the respondents reported on having gained access to information in one month or less. 98% of the respondents said that they should have a right to gain access to government held information and 99.67% said that they support having a law in Punjab that allows access to government held information.

Based upon the findings of the study, CPDI demands the enactment of a Right to Information law in Punjab on priority basis.

## Introduction

Right to Information (RTI) has been acknowledged as a tool for ensuring good governance through invoking transparency. It is an underpinning of democracy and, therefore, is recognized as an essential feature of democratic societies of the world. It assists in alleviating poverty, ensures sustainable development, and serves as a leverage right in actualizing other fundamental rights.

RTI laws serve as essential instruments to provide people access to information (ATI) held by their government departments. They enable the people to be aware of their entitlements so that they can demand for the fulfillment of those rights. RTI empowers the people to meaningfully participate in the affairs of the country. It helps the citizens to keep a check on governmental policies and actions and voice up their concerns when their interests are not met.

Pakistan has the oldest law on Right to Information, Freedom of Information Ordinance (2002), in the South Asia region and after the 18<sup>th</sup> amendment and the insertion of Article 19 A, Right to Information has become a constitutional right. Although the Federal government departments come under the scope of FOI Ordinance, however, at the provincial tier, there exists no law in the Punjab province that allows citizens access to information from the government departments.

CPDI, throughout its RTI advocacy initiatives has been stressing upon the need for the enactment of an access to Information legislation in Punjab. However, no extensive survey has so far been attempted to conduct a demand side analysis that takes into account the voice of the citizens of the Punjab province. This report is an endeavor to investigate the requirement of an Access to Information law in Punjab province. For the data collection, the research relies on a survey conducted in six districts of Punjab province including; Jhang, Jhelum, Khushab, Rawalpindi, Sargodha and Toba Tek Singh and has included a sample of 1200 respondents.

The report is divided into three sections. Section one briefly elaborates the respondents' profile that constituted the sample. Section two is the core section that provides an analysis of the different dimensions of Access to Information that the population in Punjab is currently facing. Finally, Section three, concludes the report and provides recommendations on the basis of the findings of the analysis.

## Section 1 - Respondents Profile

### Gender

There were a total of 1196 valid questionnaires in which 135 (11.3%) respondents were females and 1061 (88.7%) were males

The district wise gender split of respondents is provided in graph: 1. the largest number of females as compared to males was in Toba Tek Singh, with 55 female respondents as compared to 145 male respondents. The least number of female to male respondents at district level were in Jhelum, wherein only 3 of the respondents were females as compared to 197 male respondents. The remaining details are provided hereunder in Figure 1.

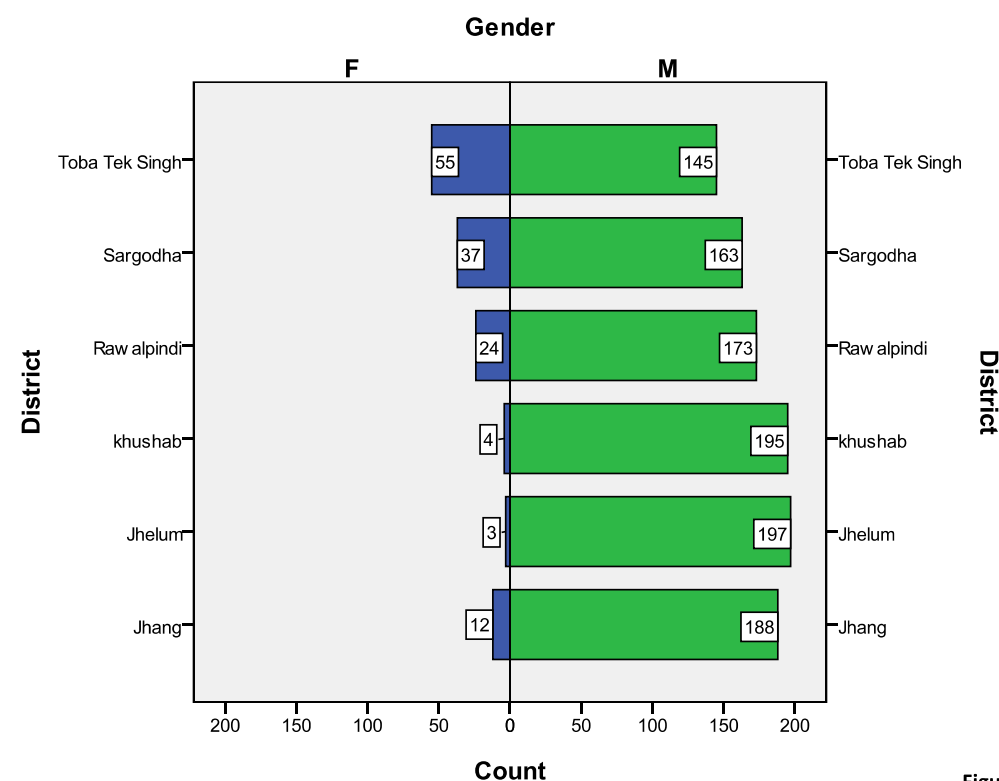


Figure 1

### Age distribution of the respondents

Maximum number of respondents fell in the age bracket of 26-30 years, i.e. 206, followed by 192 respondents falling in 21-25 years bracket. Only 27 of the respondents were above 60 years of age.

Age brackets of all the respondents are presented hereunder in Figure 2.

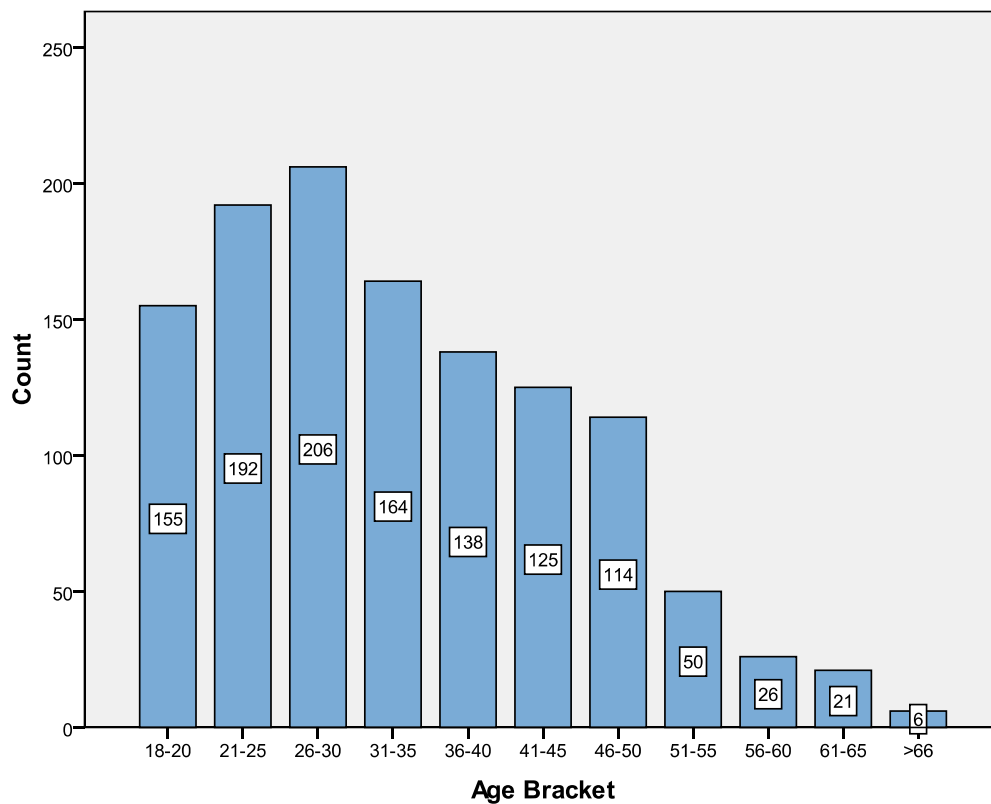


Figure 2

### Occupation of Respondents

Maximum number of respondents, 394 (33%) owned personal businesses, followed by 174 (14.5%) that were students, 163 (13.7%) were government employees.

Further details of employment status of respondents are presented in Figure 3.

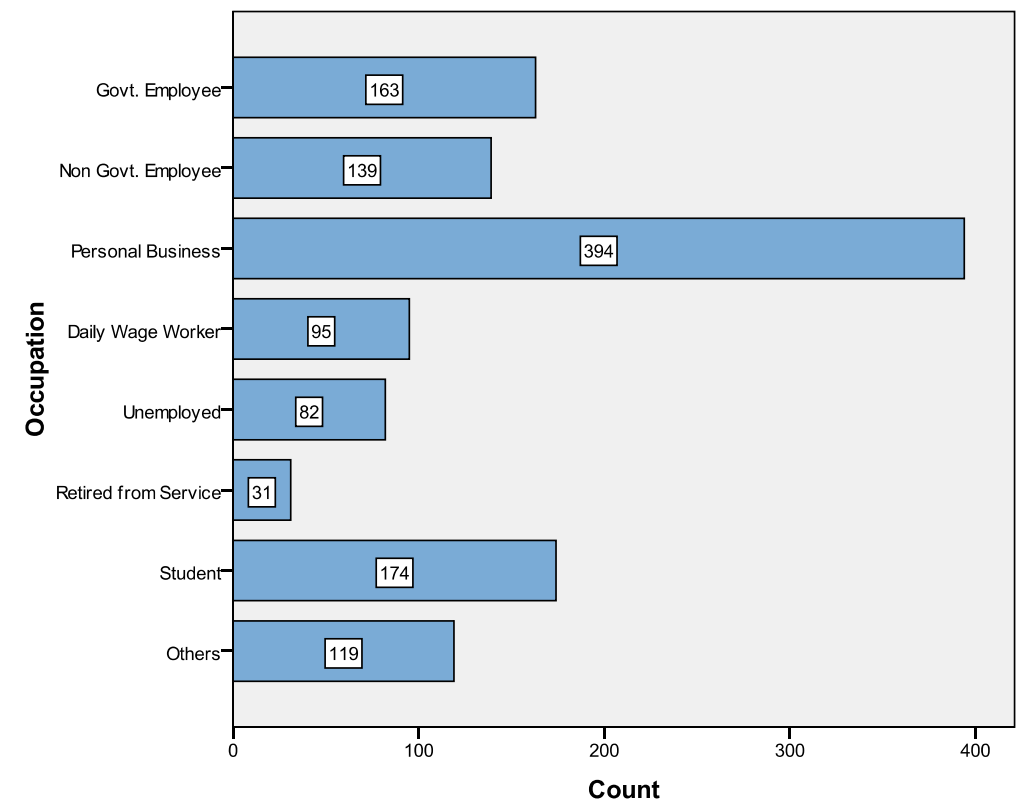


Figure 3

## Section 2 - Requirement of Access to Information Law in Punjab

Section two of the questionnaire was the core component wherein the respondents were probed on various dimensions regarding the need for an Access to Information legislation in Punjab. Questions posed were made simple so as to facilitate a greater understanding of the respondents and to avoid complexity.

### ***Possibility of gaining access to government held information***

Respondents were asked if they thought it possible to gain access to information from government departments. 430 (36.26%) respondents said they thought it is possible to gain access, 38 (3.17%) respondents thought that access could be made most of the time, 317 (26.98%) respondents thought that access to information can be made sometimes, 251 (21.22%) respondents thought that access to information is not possible, while 140 (12.28%) participants said they don't know whether it is possible or not to gain access to government held information. Figure 4 elaborates the percentage share.

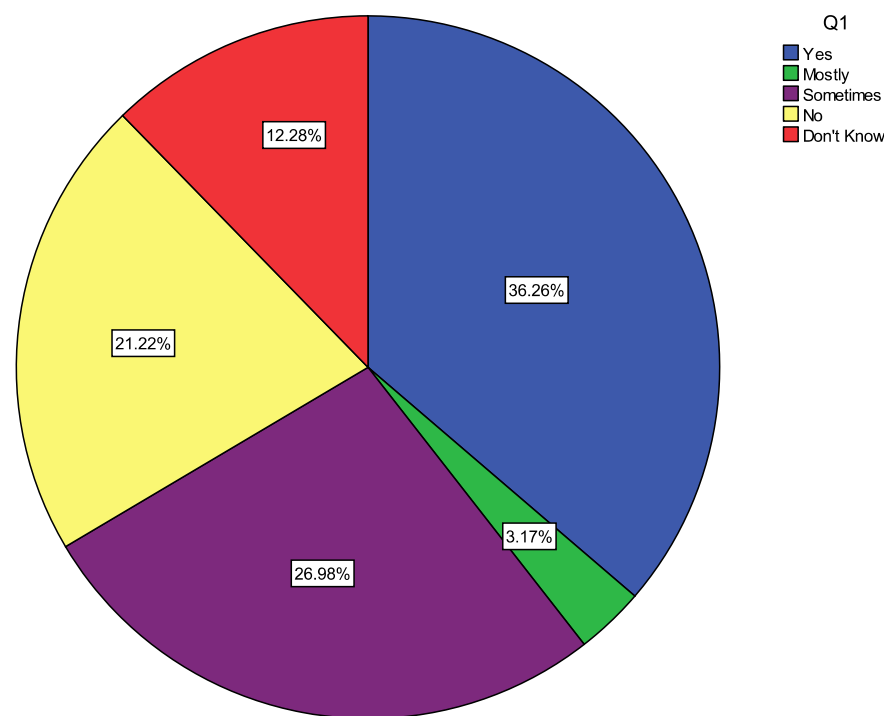


Figure 4

## ***Level of difficulty in gaining access to information***

After asking whether respondents thought gaining access to government held information was possible or not, they were asked to quantify the level of difficulty to gain access on a five point scale starting from very easy to very difficult. Only 4.93% of the respondents thought it very easy to gain access to government held information, 7.85% thought it easy to gain access, approximately 22.06% of the respondents found it partially easy to gain access, while 29.07% found it difficult and 36.09% found it very difficult to gain access to government held information. Visualization is presented in Figure 5.

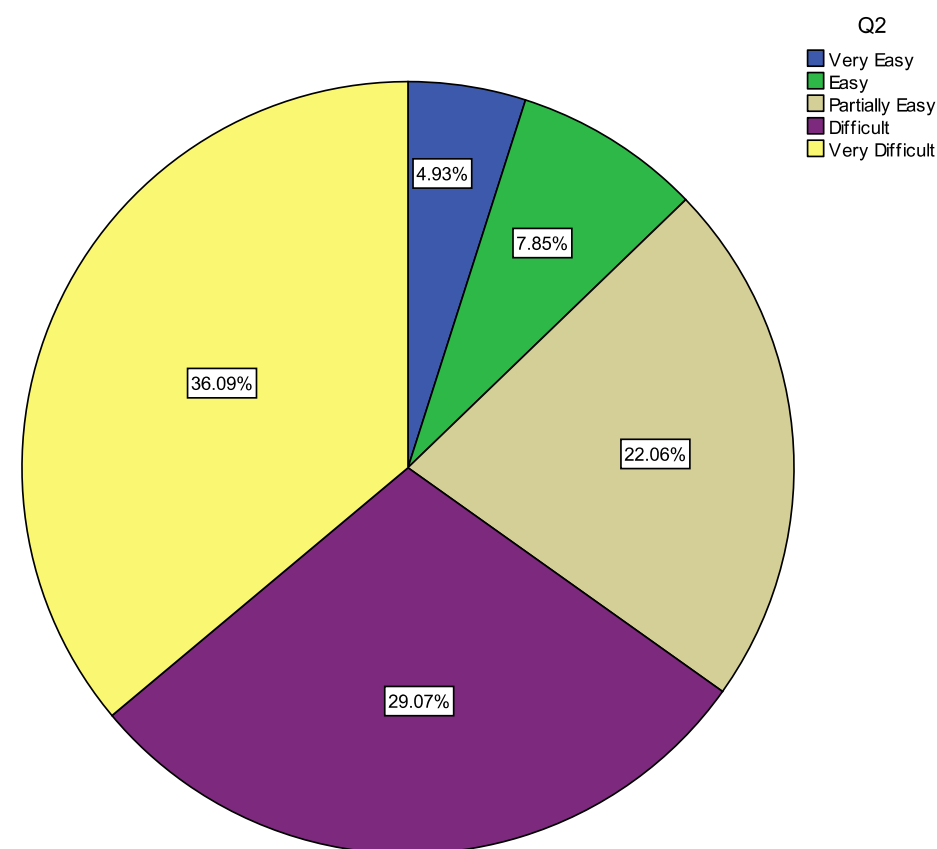


Figure 5

### Method to gain access to government held information

The purpose of this question was to gauge what the respondents thought was the best way to gain access to government held information. There were three options given for response, only 16.96% of the respondents said that information should be requested orally, while an overwhelming majority of 57.48% respondents thought that written requests should be made to gain access to information and 25.56% said they don't know what the method to gain access to government held information is. Figure 6 presents the pie chart.

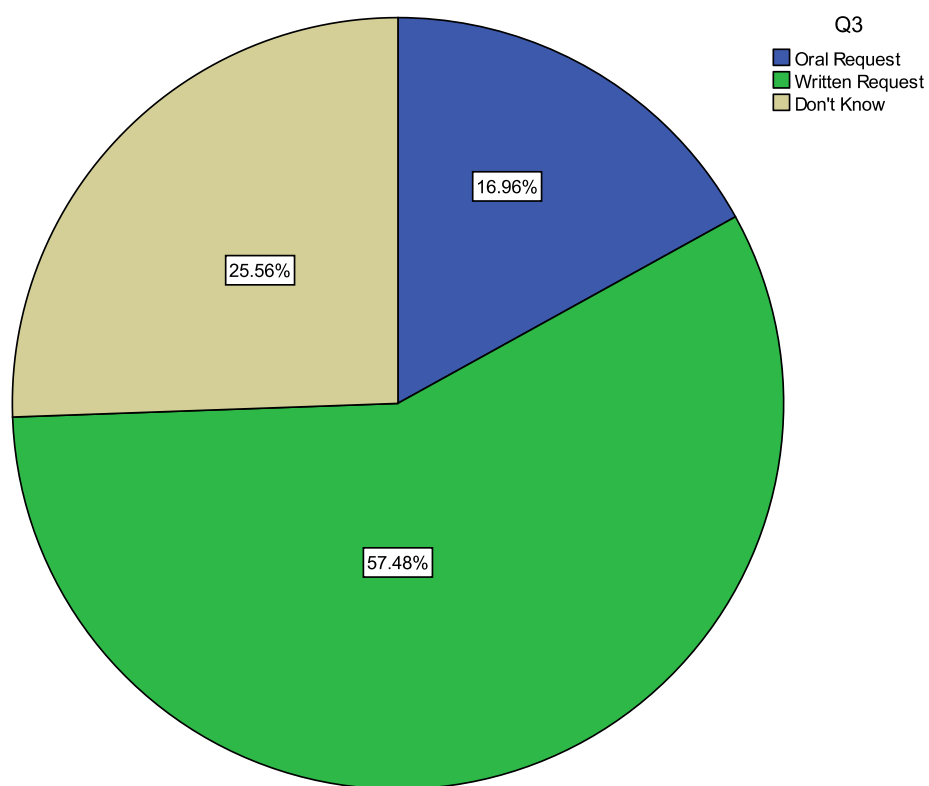


Figure 6

### Requirement for information from government departments

342 respondents (28.57%) said that either they or their family members have had the requirement to gain access to information from government departments as compared to 854 (71.43%) respondents said neither they nor their family members have ever been required to gain access to government held information. Figure 7 presents the requirements for information from the government departments.

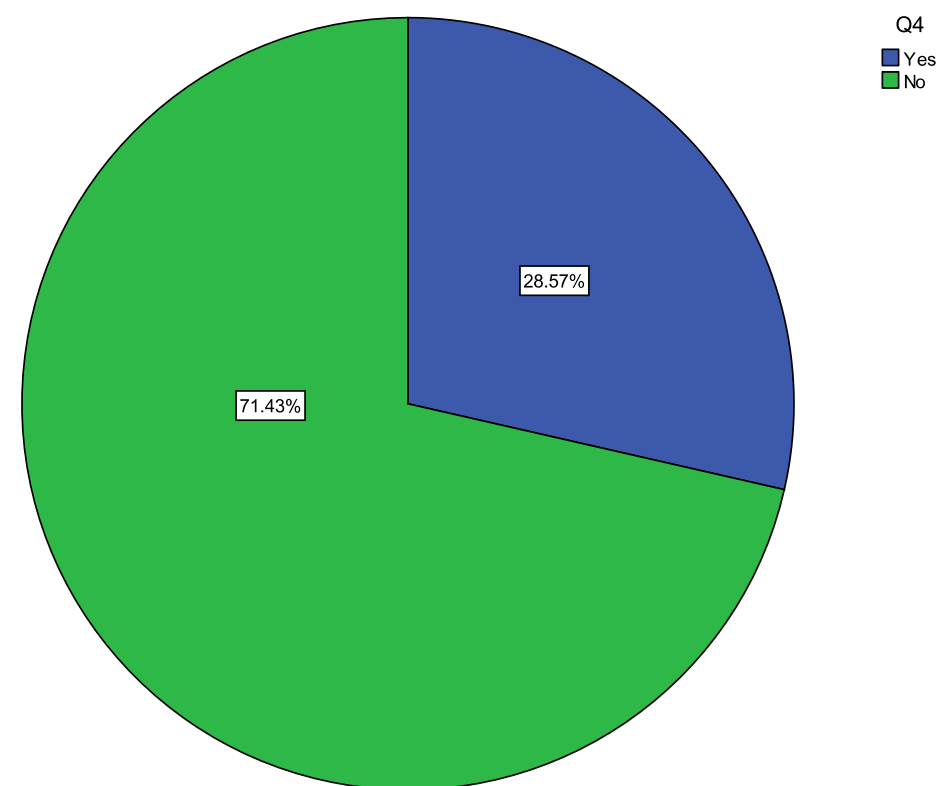


Figure 7



## Access to information

The next question probed whether the respondent or his/her family member could gain access to information or not. From those who have required information, 260 (68.24%) of the respondents said that they could gain access to information from the government departments, while 121 (31.75%) respondents said that they couldn't gain access to information from the government departments.

At the district level, the worst scenario of information access from government departments was in Jhang, wherein out of 62 people who required government held information 42 could not gain access to it. The best of the scenarios in terms of information access was in Khushab, wherein out of 183 people who required information, 161 could gain access to it.

Data for the rest of the district is presented in the Figure 8 hereunder, wherein A represents cases where information was provided and B represents cases where information was not provided.

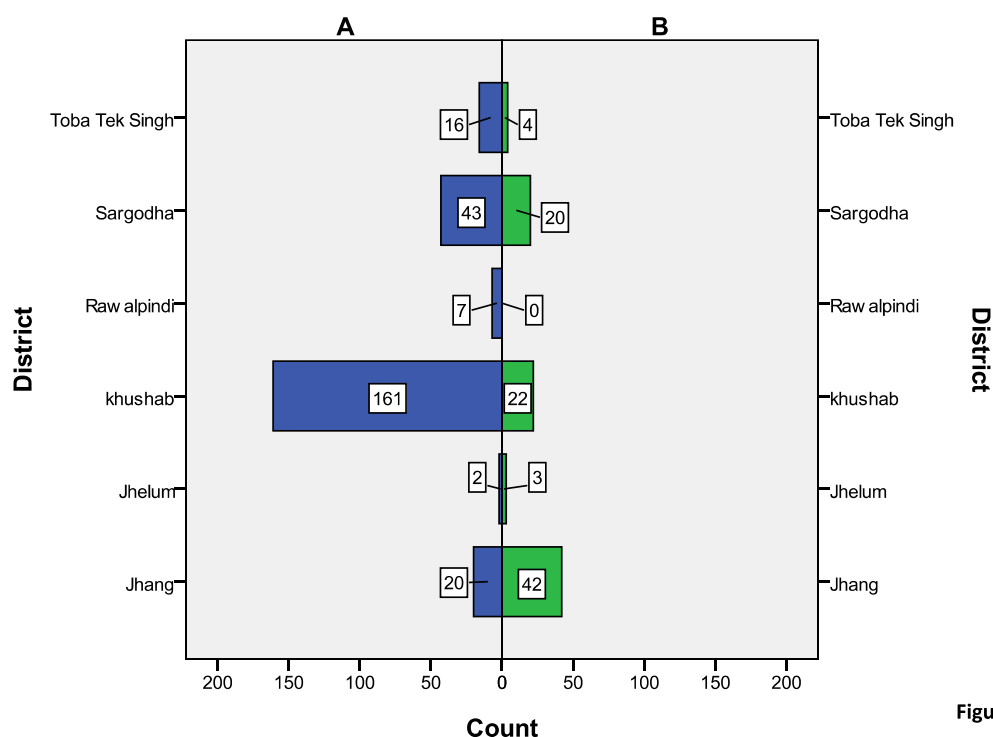


Figure 8

## Time required for obtaining information

Respondents were asked to give a time frame in which they or their household members received the information from the government departments. This was an important indicator to explore as more than often information loses its effectiveness if it is provided late. In 41.79% of the cases information was received within one month, in 30% of the cases it was received within 1-2 months, in 9.8% of the cases information was received within 3-6 months, in 7.16% of the cases information was received within 6-12 months, while in 10.74% of the cases information was received in an year or more. Table 1 below provides the details.

Table 1

Q7			
	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
One Month	140	41.79	41.79
1-2 months	102	30.44	72.23
3-6 months	33	9.85	82.08
6-12 months	24	7.16	89.25
an year or more	36	10.74	100
Total	335	100	

## Efficacy of written v/s oral requests w.r.t time period to gain access

In 25.51% of the cases, information was provided within one month on written requests, whereas 23% of information requests were met within one month on oral requests. This was followed by 21.46% of cases wherein information was provided within one-two months on written requests and 8.10% in the same time period on oral requests. In almost all the cases, no matter what the time period, written requests provided better results than the oral requests, also due to the fact that most of the people regarded . In total, in 36% of the cases information was provided on oral requests as compared to 64% of the cases wherein information was obtained through written requests.

The rest of the details are presented in Table 2.

Table 2

**Q7 \* Q8 Crosstabulation**

Time period to gain access	Information obtained through		
	Oral Request	Written Request	Total
One month	23.08	25.51	48.58
One to two months	8.10	21.46	29.55
Three to six Months	1.21	7.29	8.50
Six to Twelve months	2.02	4.86	6.88
One year or more	1.62	4.86	6.48
Total	36.03	63.97	100.00

### Means required to obtain Information from government offices

Respondents were asked to identify whether it is possible to obtain information from government offices without bribery and/or linkages in the department or not. 39% (466) of the respondents said that links in the government offices are required to obtain information from them, 34.7% (416) respondents said that you have to offer bribe for obtaining information from government departments, 10.2% (122) respondents said that information can be obtained without offering bribes or having linkages in the government offices, while 16% (192) of the respondents said that they don't know.

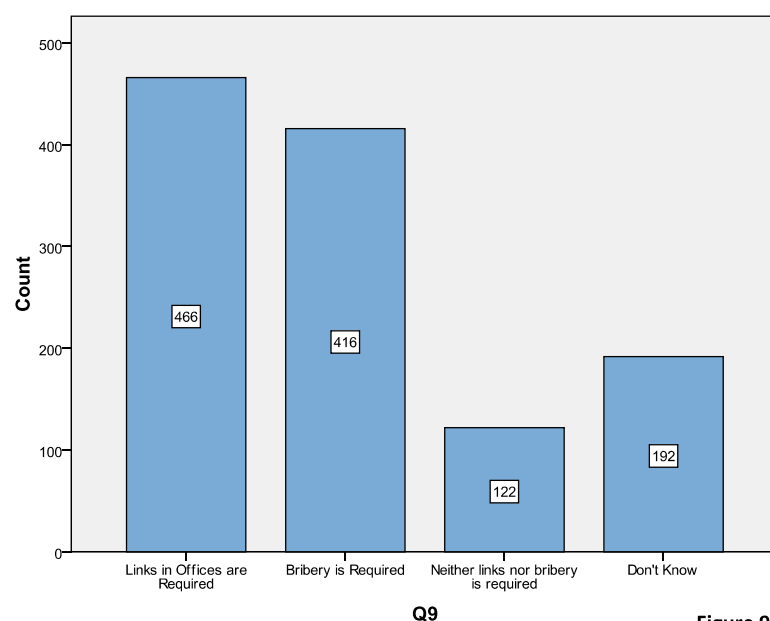


Figure 9

It should be noted that although only 28.57% (341) of the respondents or their household members have actually acquired information from the government departments, even then almost 74% of the respondents identified negative measures to obtain information from the government departments (bribes and linkages). Thereby, reflecting the negative perspective of the majority on how information from government departments can be obtained.

### Time span required to gain access to information and perspective on means to gain access

Data from Q7 (time to access information) and Q9 (means of acquiring information) was cross-tabulated to check the time frame in which information was obtained from the government departments with the respondents' perspective on means to gain access to information.

Out of the total survey respondents, 48.39% had gained access to government held information within one month; 27.42% held the perspective that links are required in government departments, 11.69% believed that bribing is required, and 7.26% thought that neither links nor bribing is required.

Details of the rest of the categories are given in the Table 3 hereunder:

Table 3

		For gaining access to information				Total (%)
		Links are Reqd (% of total)	Bribing is Reqd (% of total)	Neither links nor Bribing is Reqd (% of total)	Don't Know (% of total)	
How much time was required to gain access to information?	One Month (% of total)	27.42	11.69	7.26	2.02	48.39
	1-2 Months (% of total)	15.32	8.06	3.23	3.23	29.84
	3-6 Months (% of total)	5.24	2.82	0.40	0.00	8.47
	6-12 Months (% of total)	2.42	3.63	0.40	0.40	6.85
	More than year (% of total)	3.23	2.82	0.40	0.00	6.45
	<b>Total (%)</b>	<b>53.63</b>	<b>29.03</b>	<b>11.69</b>	<b>5.65</b>	<b>100.00</b>

### Recognition of information as people's right

People were asked to identify whether they should have a right to access government held information of their requirement. A majority 98% said that they should have the right to gain access, only .33% said that they shouldn't and 1.59% said that they don't know whether they should have a right or not.

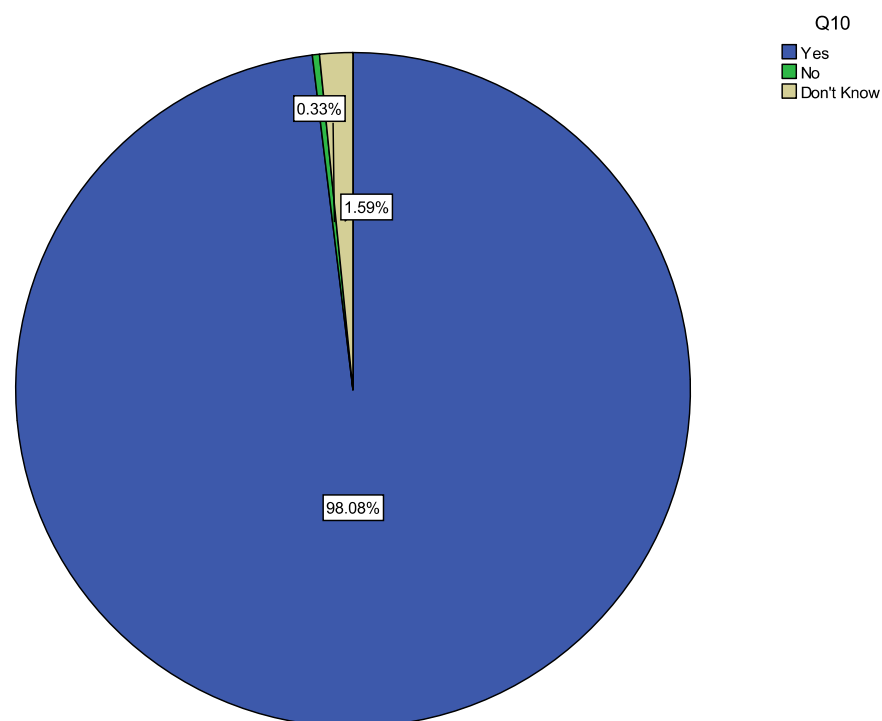


Figure 10

### Support for an information law in Punjab Province

Our survey culminated with the most important question of the study, whether people support a law in Punjab province granting them access to Information from the government departments. 99.67% of the respondents said that they support a law in the Punjab province that allows for access to information against only .33% that said they didn't support such a law.

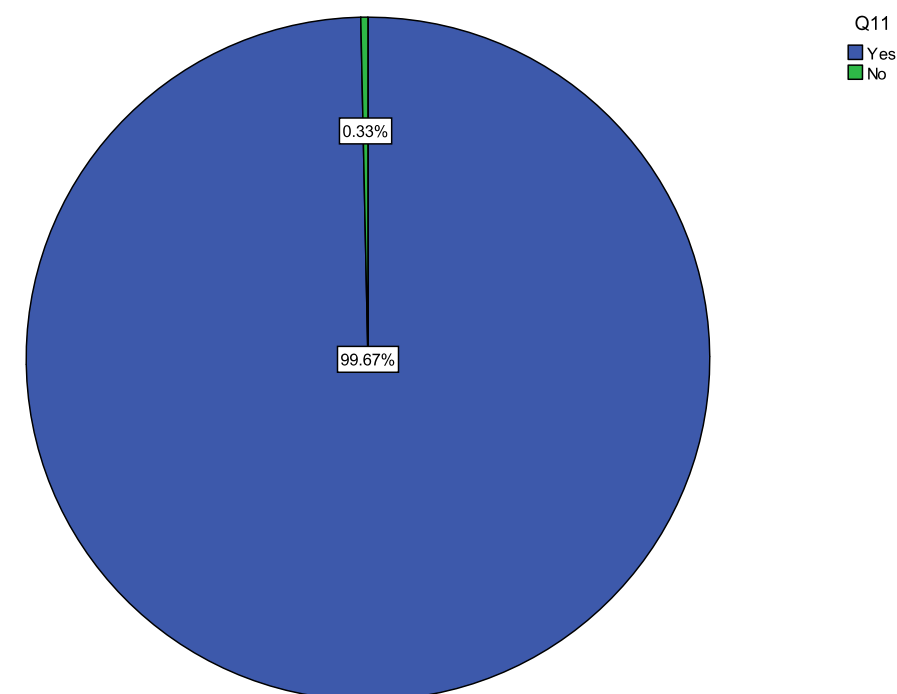


Figure 11

## Conclusion and Recommendations

In the absence of an information access law in the Punjab province, the citizens hold no legitimacy to gain timely access to information from provincial government departments. People are unaware of the procedure to gain access and information is accessed both orally and through written requests. Although, the response rate on oral requests is not disappointing, however, the credibility of such information cannot be guaranteed unless it is certified in writing. People gain access to information in varying time periods, and that too is subject to having links in the departments and payment of bribes to the government officers/offices. Moreover, there is an almost unanimous agreement on having both Right to Information as well as a provincial law that guarantees the fulfillment of that right.

Keeping in view the current status of information access in Punjab and the high demand of the citizens on the same, It is therefore, recommended that an information law be enacted in the Punjab province on earliest priority that guarantees citizens cost effective and speedy access to information from government departments in the province. Moreover, such law would also provide relief to the citizens by allowing them a legal remedy to gain information access and, thereby, reduce bribery and corruption in the government departments to raise the trust of the citizenry on provincial departments.

## Appendix

## Appendix: 1 – Sampling Procedure

### Sampling Procedure

A sample of 1200 Households would be surveyed from the province of Punjab. The Survey would be carried out in all six project districts of Punjab, i.e., Rawalpindi, Jhelum, Sargodha, Khoshab, Jhang, and Toba Tek Singh. From each district a sample of 200 HH will be selected. The selection procedure for the tehsils and steps to follow are provided hereunder:

1. Randomly select two tehsils from each of the six districts;
2. Randomly select one Union Council (UC) from each of the selected tehsils;
3. Follow the sampling instructions for surveyors at the UCs.

#### Sampling Instructions for the surveyors at UC level

1. Every Union Council will conduct the survey on a sample size of 100 Households (HH);
2. Calculate  $n^{\text{th}}$  value (take an approximation of total HH in the Union Council and divide by 100);
3. Start from the main mosque of the Union Council and select the  $n^{\text{th}}$  house on the right hand side of the mosque (if no right hand side exists go to left);
4. Keep selecting every  $n^{\text{th}}$  house on the right hand side (only choosing the left hand side if no right side exists) until you complete the 100 HH of the Union Council;
5. If no respondent is available in a HH, note the address and return back later to the same HH, if no respondent is found the second time then select the neighboring HH on the right.

## Appendix: 2 – Instructions for the surveyors

### Instructions for the surveyors

You have a vital role to play in the successful conduct of this research, as you will collect the entire information on the basis of which the results of this research will be formulated. Considering this, it's necessary that you understand your role fully and perform your job professionally, honestly and to the best of your abilities. To facilitate your job we are providing you following list of dos and don'ts, which will help you in understanding what to do and what not to do while conducting a scientific survey:


#### Dos

- ✓ DO familiarize yourself thoroughly with the questionnaire
- ✓ DO introduce yourself and show your ID to the potential respondent
- ✓ DO explain the purpose of the survey and ask for the respondent's consent before starting questions
- ✓ DO tell the respondent the approximate time it will take to fill the questionnaire.
- ✓ DO try to find a quiet place to conduct the interview
- ✓ Do fill questionnaire yourself
- ✓ DO use a conversational tone – avoid having the interview sounding like an interrogation.
- ✓ DO speak slowly and clearly.
- ✓ DO wait patiently for a response. Probe politely if the question was not answered
- ✓ DO thank the respondent at the end of the interview.
- ✓ DO verify that you have recorded all the answers after completing a questionnaire.
- ✓ DO check off the completed interview on your list of sites to visit

**Don'ts**

- ✓ DON'T handover the questionnaire to the respondent
- ✓ DON'T change the wording or the order of the questions.
- ✓ DON'T skip questions. Ask them exactly as they appear.
- ✓ DON'T leave any box to be filled later
- ✓ DON'T push a respondent to answer more quickly.
- ✓ If the respondent doesn't understand a question or his/her answer is not clear, DO ask the question again. Avoid changing the wording of the question too much.
- ✓ DON'T guide/direct/lead the respondent's answer:
  - DON'T suggest a response by your voice, facial expression or attitude.
  - DON'T hint that a response is correct or incorrect.
  - DON'T show approval or disapproval.
  - DO stay neutral when you probe.
- ✓ If an answer given contradicts something the respondent said earlier, DO try to clarify the confusion.
- ✓ DON'T invent an answer to a question.
- ✓ DON'T get angry. Stay polite and friendly.
- ✓ DON'T offer or accept gifts.
- ✓ DON'T change interview sites without permission from the field supervisor

**Appendix 3 - Questionnaire**

 **سوالنامہ**

کیا پنجاب میں معلومات تک رسائی کے قانون کی ضرورت ہے؟  
تعاون  
سی پی ڈی آئی

**سکیشن 1.**

نام: \_\_\_\_\_ فون نمبر: \_\_\_\_\_

1. پیدائش کی تاریخ: \_\_\_\_\_ 2. تحصیل/ٹاؤن: \_\_\_\_\_ 3. ضلع: \_\_\_\_\_

**4. جنس:** 1. مرد ☐ 2. عورت ☐

**5. عمر:**

1. 18 سے 20 ☐ 2. 21 سے 25 ☐ 3. 26 سے 30 ☐ 4. 31 سے 35 ☐

5. 36 سے 40 ☐ 6. 41 سے 45 ☐ 7. 46 سے 50 ☐ 8. 51 سے 55 ☐

9. 56 سے 60 ☐ 10. 61 سے 65 ☐ 11. 66 اور زیادہ ☐

**6. پیشہ:**

1. سرکاری ملازم ☐ 2. غیر سرکاری ملازم ☐ 3. اپنا کاروبار ☐ 4. دیہاتی کی ملازمت ☐

5. بے روزگار ☐ 6. ریٹائرڈ ملازم ☐ 7. سٹوڈنٹ ☐ 8. دیگر ☐

**سکیشن 2.**

معلومات تک رسائی کے قانون کی پنجاب میں ضرورت

1- کیا آپ کے خیال میں عمومی طور پر سرکاری اداروں سے معلومات حاصل کی جاسکتی ہیں

A ہاں ☐ B زیادہ تر ☐ C کبھی کبھار ☐ D نہیں ☐

E پیٹھیں ☐

2- کیا آپ کے خیال میں سرکاری اداروں سے معلومات حاصل کرنا:

A بے حد آسان ہے ☐ B آسان ہے ☐ C کسی حد تک آسان ہے ☐



Centre for Peace and  
Development Initiatives

- .D' مشکل ہے E ہے حد مشکل ہے
3. سرکاری اداروں سے معلومات حاصل کرنے کا طریقہ کیا ہے
- A زبانی درخواست کر کے B لکھی ہوئی درخواست کر کے C تین سے چھ مہینے D پتہ نہیں
4. کیا آپ کو یا آپ کے گھر والوں کو کبھی سرکاری اداروں سے معلومات حاصل کرنے کی ضرورت پڑی
- A ہاں B نہیں (اگر جواب منفی میں ہے تو سوال 9 پر جائیں)
5. برائے مہربانی حاصل کردہ معلومات کی نوعیت بتائیں
6. کیا آپ معلومات حاصل کر سکتے / سکتی؟
- A ہاں B نہیں (اگر جواب منفی میں ہے تو سوال 9 پر جائیں)
7. معلومات کے حصول میں کتنا وقت لگا
- A ایک مہینہ B ایک سے دو مہینے C تین سے چھ مہینے D چھ سے بارہ مہینے
8. آپ نے معلومات کا حصول کیسے کیا
- A زبانی درخواست کر کے B لکھی ہوئی درخواست کر کے
9. سرکاری اداروں سے معلومات حاصل کرنے کے لئے:
- A دفتر میں تعلق کی ضرورت ہوتی ہے B رشوت کی ضرورت ہوتی ہے C تعلقات کی اور رشوت کی ضرورت نہیں ہوتی D پتہ نہیں
10. کیا عوام کو سرکاری اداروں کے پاس اپنی ضرورت کی معلومات حاصل کرنے کا حق ہونا چاہیے؟
- A ہاں B نہیں C پتہ نہیں
11. کیا آپ چاہتے ہیں کہ صوبے میں ایسا قانون ہو جو سرکاری اداروں سے آپ کی ضرورت کی معلومات دلوا سکے
- A ہاں B نہیں

