Case Study – 2

**The Vehari District Primary School Teacher and the Right to Information Act: A Case Study in the Importance of RTI in Ensuring Transparency and Accountability in Public Institutions**

**Introduction:**

In June 2014, a primary school teacher from Vehari district in Punjab, made a request for a seniority list of teachers in the district under the Punjab Transparency and Right to Information Act 2013. The request was met with resistance from the Executive District Officer (EDO) of Vehari, who launched an enquiry against the teacher, accusing him of misusing the RTI Act.

**Background:**

The Punjab Transparency and Right to Information Act 2013 came into effect in October 2013, providing citizens with the right to access information held by public bodies. The law was seen as a significant step towards promoting transparency and accountability in public institutions, particularly in a country where corruption and lack of transparency are significant challenges.

**Case Description:**

The case involved a primary school teacher who requested a seniority list of teachers in the Vehari district under the RTI Act. However, the EDO of Vehari accused the teacher of misusing the RTI Act and initiated an enquiry against him. The move was seen as an attempt to intimidate and harass the teacher and discourage citizens from exercising their right to information.

**Outcome:**

The teacher filed a complaint with the Punjab Information Commission which declared the enquiry null and void and ruled in favor of the teacher. The Punjab Information Commission decision was a significant victory for the Right to Information movement in Pakistan and highlighted the importance of transparency and accountability in public institutions.

**Conclusion:**

The Vehari District Primary School Teacher's case underscores the importance of the RTI Act in ensuring transparency and accountability in public institutions. It also highlights the need for public officials to be aware of their obligations under the RTI Act and to respect the rights of citizens to access information without fear of harassment or intimidation.