Case Study – 6

**RTI as a Tool for Unearthing Inefficient Practices in Public Bodies**

**Introduction:**

The misuse of official vehicles is a widespread problem in many countries, including Pakistan. To curb this problem, the Centre for Peace and Development Initiatives (CPDI) submitted information requests to all Deputy Commissioners and District Coordination Officers in Pakistan to access copies of the official vehicles under their use. This case study is based on one such information request to the Deputy Commissioner of Karachi East, which was submitted under the Sindh Freedom of Information Ordinance 2006.

**Background:**

*Misuse of Official Vehicles in Pakistan:* The use of official vehicles for personal reasons is a significant issue in Pakistan. This misuse of government resources not only wastes taxpayers' money but can also contribute to criminal activities. To address this issue, CPDI requested access to copies of the logbooks of official vehicles in use by public officials across Pakistan.

**RTI Request and Response:**

On March 29, 2013, CPDI submitted an information request to the Deputy Commissioner of Karachi East, requesting certified copies of the logbook of each vehicle under the use of the office. In response, DC Sami Siddiqui explained that the practice of maintaining logbooks for government vehicles had been discontinued for the last 12-13 years, and that the government of Sindh was not providing printed logbooks. As a result, the office was unable to provide certified copies of the logbooks.

**Investigation and Media Coverage:**

This revelation was significant, as it meant that thousands of official vehicles in Sindh were not being tracked, making them susceptible to misuse and potentially aiding criminal activities. The information was shared with the media, which resulted in an investigative report being published in 'The News International' on October 23, 2013, with the headline 'No logbooks of thousands of official cars in Sindh helping criminals'.

**Conclusion:**

The misuse of official vehicles is a significant issue in many countries, and the case study of the Deputy Commissioner of Karachi East highlights how RTI can be used to address this issue. The lack of maintenance of logbooks in public bodies can have serious implications, and RTI can be used to expose such issues. This case study demonstrates the importance of transparency in government practices and the role that RTI can play in ensuring accountability.