

BEFORE THE APPELLATE AUTHORITY
(Under the Right to Information Act, 2005)
SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE BOARD OF INDIA

Appeal No. 6576 of 2025

Akash Parab : Appellant
Vs

CPIO, SEBI, Mumbai : Respondent

ORDER

1. The appellant had filed an application dated September 17, 2025 (received by the respondent through RTI MIS Portal) under the Right to Information Act, 2005 (“**RTI Act**”). The respondent, by a letter dated September 26, 2025, responded to the application filed by the appellant. The appellant filed an appeal (Reg. No. SEBIH/A/E/25/00259) dated September 26, 2025. I have carefully considered the application, the response and the appeal and find that the matter can be decided based on the material available on record.
2. **Queries in the application** - The appellant, in his application dated September 17, 2025, sought the following information:

“ “I, Akash Parab, am filing this RTI application under Section 6 1 of the RTI Act, 2005.

Advocate Pratik Ingle, in legal matters, has made reference to a so-called PhD Court while handling academic/ administrative disputes. Further, it has been observed that disclosures of advocate payments in regulatory matters are being linked with RTI applications filed by me reference: DGICI/R/E/25/00094, SEBIH/R/E/25/00794 & MOCAF/R/T/25/00514.

In this regard, I seek the following certified information from SEBI

1. Whether SEBI recognizes or maintains any tribunal/ body/ committee referred to as PhD Court.

If yes, kindly provide: The establishing notification/ order.

The role, jurisdiction, and mandate of such a body.

List of cases handled by it in the last 5 years.

If no such body exists, kindly confirm whether SEBI has any record, guidelines, or correspondence mentioning the term PhD Court.

2. Provide certified details of advocate payments made by SEBI in the last 5 years, particularly in cases related to RTI matters and appeals, including:

Names of advocates engaged. Case references (with RTI numbers where applicable).

Payment amounts and dates.

3. Whether SEBI has issued any circulars or internal guidelines linking advocate engagement or legal expenditure with RTI applications filed by citizens.”

3. **Reply of the Respondent** –The respondent, in response to query nos. 1 and 3 in the application, informed that the information sought is in the nature of seeking clarification / opinion. Accordingly, the same cannot be construed as “Information”, as defined u/s 2(f) of the RTI Act.

The respondent, in response to query no. 2, informed that the information with respect to payment of fees to Advocates in last 5 years, particularly with respect to RTI matters, including name of Advocates, case reference etc. are maintained in different documents/ files. Collating such information would disproportionately divert the resources of SEBI in terms of section 7 (9) of the RTI Act. Further, the respondent also informed that the details of expenses made by SEBI are available in the Annual Statement of Accounts, which can be accessed from website of SEBI.

4. **Ground of appeal** – The appellant has filed the appeal on the ground that he was provided incomplete, misleading or false information.
5. I have perused the application and the response provided thereto. With respect to query nos. 1 and 3, I find that the queries are in the nature of seeking clarification/opinion/confirmation from the respondent. I find that the said queries cannot be construed as seeking ‘information’ as defined under section 2(f) of the RTI Act. Consequently, the respondent did not have an obligation to provide such clarification or opinion or confirmation under the RTI Act. In this context, reliance is placed on matter of *Azad Singh vs. CPIO, Oriental Insurance Company Limited* (order dated March 23, 2021) wherein Hon’ble Central Information Commission(**CIC**) observed that “7. The Commission, after hearing the submissions of both the parties

and after perusal of records, observed that some queries of the appellant are in the nature of seeking explanation/ opinion/ advice/ confirmation/ clarification from the CPIO and he has expected that the CPIO firstly should analyze the documents and then provide information to the appellant. But the CPIO is not supposed to create information; or to interpret information; or to compile information as per the desire of the appellant under the ambit of the RTI Act. As per Section 2(f) of the RTI Act, the reasons/ opinions/ advices can only be provided to the applicants if it is available on record of the public authority. The CPIO cannot create information in the manner as sought by the appellant. The CPIO is only a communicator of information based on the records held in the office and hence, he cannot be expected to do research work to deduce anything from the material therein and then supply it to him.” Accordingly, I do not find any deficiency in the response of the respondent.

6. With respect to query no. 2, On consideration, I note that the requested information is not readily available with the respondent in the manner as sought by the appellant and that collating the required information would disproportionately divert the resources of SEBI and would defeat ‘the practical regime of right to information’ as envisaged in the preamble of the RTI Act. In this context, I note that the Hon’ble CIC, in the matter of *Mr. Deepak Girdhar vs. CPIO, SEBI* (Order dated March 30, 2021), observed that “6. *The Commission, after hearing the submissions of the respondent and after perusal of records, observes that the information sought by the appellant is voluminous in nature and may not be readily available with the CPIO in the manner as sought by the appellant, collating and compiling of which would disproportionately divert the resources of the respondent organization. Hence, the disclosure of information is exempted as per Section 7(9) of the RTI Act.*” In view of these observations, I find that the requested information is exempt from disclosure under section 7(9) of the RTI Act. Accordingly, I do not find any deficiency in the response of the respondent.
7. In view of the above observations, I find that there is no need to interfere with the decision of the respondent. The appeal is accordingly dismissed.

Place: Mumbai

Date: October 10, 2025

RUCHI CHOJER

**APPELLATE AUTHORITY UNDER THE RTI ACT
SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE BOARD OF INDIA**