**Section 4 of the RTI Act**

### Why in News?
- **Increased demand for information:** With the rise in awareness and digital literacy, people are demanding access to information more than ever before.
- **Proactive disclosures:** There is a focus on making information available proactively, rather than on request, to encourage transparency and reduce the burden on public officials.
- **RTI Act compliance:** Non-compliance with Section 4 of the RTI Act has been a major concern, leading to increased scrutiny and audits.

### Findings of Audit
- **Non-compliance issues:** A recent audit by the Central Information Commission (CIC) found that over 85% of public authorities audited did not disclose information related to budget and programming.
- **Transparency audit:** The CIC has undertaken a transparency audit to ascertain the quality of suo-motu disclosures.

### Major Reasons behind Non-Compliance & Solutions

#### Non-Compliance
- **Lack of Awareness among PIOs:** Public Information Officers (PIOs) often lack awareness about their responsibilities under the RTI Act.
- **Demand-Based Supply:** Public authorities tend to provide information based on the demand for it rather than proactively.
- **Obsolete record management guidelines:** Many departments still follow outdated guidelines, which hinder proactive disclosure.
- **Poor quality of information provided:** The information provided is often outdated, incomplete, or of poor quality.

#### Solutions
- **Awareness drive:** The government should conduct awareness campaigns to educate public officials about their responsibilities.
- **Training of public authorities:** PIOs need to be trained on how to comply with proactive disclosure rules.
- **Improved record management:** Updating record-keeping systems to ensure materials are up-to-date and easily accessible.
- **Proactive disclosure:** Encouraging proactive disclosure of information to prevent requests.

### Way Forward
- **Improving Information Management:** Establishing Public Records Offices (PROs) for website management and overseeing proper record keeping.
- **Improving Record Management:** Developing procedures for maintaining all records, cataloguing, indexing, and auditing.
- **Improving Infrastructure:** Allocating funds for modern infrastructure needs.
- **Publicity and Public Interface:** Ensuring the public is informed about the importance of transparency and proactive disclosure.

### Related News
- **Recent developments:** Changes in the RTI Act and the role of public officials in maintaining transparency.
- **Transparency Index:** Rankings and evaluations of government transparency based on proactive disclosures.