

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

Appeal No. 5730 of 2023

S V Pardeshi : Appellant

Vs
CPIO, SEBI, Mumbai : Respondent

ORDER

1. The appellant had filed an application dated April 24, 2023 (received by the respondent through RTI MIS Portal) under the Right to Information Act, 2005 (“**RTI Act**”). The respondent, by a letter dated May 22, 2023 responded to the application filed by the appellant. The appellant filed an appeal (Reg. No. SEBIH/A/E/23/00144) dated July 06, 2023. 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. **Ground of appeal-** The appellant has filed the appeal on the ground that the information provided was incomplete, misleading or false. In view of the submissions made by the appellant in his appeal, I am dealing with the queries and the response provided thereto in the following paragraphs.
3. **Query numbers 1 and 2-** The appellant, vide query numbers 1 and 2, sought the following information:

*“1. Information about mobile communication allowance paid to SEBI officers with post name and amount.
2. Information about SEBI expense in mobile communication of staff from 2015-22 year wise with amount.”*
4. The respondent, in response to the aforesaid queries, informed that the queries are vague and not specific and accordingly, the same cannot be construed as seeking “information” as defined under section 2(f) of the RTI Act. The appellant, in his appeal, *inter alia*, submitted that the information was denied by the CPIO without application of mind.
5. I have perused the queries with the response provided by the respondent. I find that the queries are vague and not specific. In this context, I note that in the matter of *Shri S. C. Sharma vs. CPIO, SEBI* (Decision dated August 30, 2012), the Hon’ble CIC held: “*Since the Appellant had not clearly stated what exact*

information he wanted, the CPIO could not have provided any specific information to him.” In view of these observations, I do not find any deficiency in the response.

6. **Query number 3-** The appellant, vide query number 3, sought the following information:

“3. Information about mobile numbers of SEBI Officers with name, post have official mobile number or allowance paid by SEBI.”

7. The respondent, in response to the aforesaid query, informed that the requested information is exempt from disclosure under section 8(1)(g) and 8(1)(j) of the RTI Act as the same relates to personal information, the disclosure of which has no relationship to any public activity or interest and may cause unwarranted invasion in to the privacy of the individual. The respondent also informed that disclosure of the information may endanger the life or physical safety of the person(s). The appellant, in his appeal, *inter alia*, requested to direct the CPIO to share the information.
8. I have perused the query and the response provided thereto. On consideration, I find that the non-disclosure of information relating to SEBI officials is justified as the same relates to personal information, the disclosure of which has no relationships to any public activity or interest and may cause unwarranted invasion into the privacy of the individual. I note that a similar issue was settled in the matter of *H. E. Rajashekarappa vs. State Public Information Officer and Ors.* (Order dated July 01, 2008), wherein the Hon’ble High Court of Karnataka had ruled that: *“... it cannot be said that section 2(f) of the Act (the RTI Act encompasses the personal information of the officials of the public authority. The intention of the legislation is to provide right to information to a citizen pertaining to public affairs of the public authority”*. Further, I note that the Hon’ble CIC, in the matter of *Rakesh Kumar Gupta vs. CPIO* (order dated January 10, 2023) held that *“ Similarly, the Commission cannot lose sight of the fact that some of the points of the RTI Application also seek information of a personal nature of third parties, for instance details of officers dealing with the subject matter complaints (as mentioned in the RTI Application), directory of supervisor officers and other allied information, such categories of information also stand exempted from disclosure under Section 8(1)(j) of the RTI Act.”* In view of these observations, I find that the requested information is exempt from disclosure under section 8(1)(j) of the RTI Act. Accordingly, I do not find any deficiency in the response.
9. Notwithstanding the same, I note that the directory of SEBI employees along with telephone numbers, in available on the SEBI website, which is in the public domain. The link for accessing the same is mentioned below-

<https://www.sebi.gov.in/sebiweb/home/directory-of-sebi.jsp>

10. 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: August 07, 2023

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