

SEEKING BANK EMPLOYEES' PERSONAL INFORMATION HAS BEEN EXEMPTED UNDER RTI BY THE SUPREME COURT.

The Supreme Court has held that seeking information about individual bank employees which were personal in nature and devoid of any public interest, was exempted under the Right To Information Act.

The court made the observation while allowing an appeal filed by Canara Bank challenging an order of the Kerala High Court directing it to provide information under the Right to Information (RTI) Act about transfers and postings of its entire clerical staff from January 2002 to July 2006.

Relying on a 2013 apex court verdict, a bench comprising Justices R K Agrawal and A M Sapre said the information sought by a man, who was working as a clerical staff in the bank, was "personal in nature" and exempted from being disclosed under section 8(j) of the RTI Act.

It said neither the man had "*disclosed any public interest much less larger public interest involved in seeking such information of the individual employee*" nor any finding was recorded by Central Information Commission (CIC) and the high court regarding any public interest in supplying such information to him.

He had in August 2006 made an application to the public information officer (PIO) of the bank under the RTI Act and sought information regarding transfers and postings of the entire clerical staff from January 2002 to July 2006 in all the branches. He had also asked for information regarding personal details of individual employees like date of joining, designation and promotion earned.

The banks PIO had expressed his inability to furnish details sought by him on the ground that it was protected from being disclosed under the provisions of the Act and had no nexus with any public interest.

The man had thereafter filed an appeal before the chief public information officer who also dismissed it. Later, he moved the CIC which in February 2007 asked the bank to furnish the information sought by him. Aggrieved by the order, the bank approached the high court which dismissed its plea while affirming the order of the CIC.

The top court allowed the appeal filed by the bank while setting aside the orders of the high court and the CIC.