

HC: No RTI Route to GST Returns: Court Upholds Confidentiality

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REFER THE DECISION OF THE HON'BLE BOMBAY HIGH COURT IN THE CASE OF

Adarsh s/o Gautam Pimpure v. State of Maharashtra - [2025] 179 taxmann.com 437 (Bombay)

Adarsh Pimpure, a vigilant citizen, was convinced that certain industries were involved in large-scale tax fraud. Determined to expose the alleged wrongdoing, he filed an **RTI (Right to Information) application** seeking details of **GST returns** filed by those industries.

However, the authorities declined his request, citing **Section 158 of the GST Act, 2017**, which clearly states that **information furnished under the GST law — such as returns, details of supplies, and transactions — is confidential** and cannot be disclosed except in specific circumstances.

Unhappy with this reply, Adarsh approached the **Bombay High Court**, arguing that transparency demanded disclosure and that the information was necessary to unearth fraud.

The Court carefully examined the case and noted that the **allegations of fraud were vague and unsupported by any evidence**. A mere suspicion or general accusation, the Court said, cannot override the statutory confidentiality provided under Section 158.

Upholding the stand of the authorities, the Court ruled that **GST return information is protected from public disclosure under the RTI Act. The confidentiality clause in the GST law takes precedence unless there is clear, prima facie proof of fraud or public interest of a very high order.**

// भगवान महावीर का संदेश //

"जीवो और जीने दो" — यही हो हमारा संकल्प।

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