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THE RIGHT TO INFORMATION ACT, 2005 – IMPACT ON THE ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY OF INDIA’S ADMINISTRATIVE DECISIONS

AUTHORED BY - MALAVIKA SK

Abstract

This paper belongs to the subject of administrative law, under which it studies the Right to Information Act of 2005 and its impact on the accountability and transparency of India’s administrative decisions. This paper addresses the positive and negative impacts of the Act based on the analysis of legislative ambiguities, procedural irregularities and judicial pronouncements. There have been previous studies on the general impact and efficiency of the Act regarding comparison with foreign legislations and comparative analysis of the before and after effects of the Act. The main goal of this research is to expand on the ambiguity in the wording of the Act, the political hindrances faced by the Act in its implementation, and how the judicial judgment has facilitated or hindered its functioning. This research uses secondary data for research, and it is found that though the RTI is the most powerful tool to get a transparent government, the people are still in the dark on how to use the tool properly, and the government authorities use this lack of knowledge to their advantage. It is important for the government to create awareness about the Act among people and students through media, NGOs and educational institutions and also establish a monitoring system to ensure proper maintenance of public records.

Keywords: RTI, Right to Information Act 2005, accountability, transparency, citizens, Information Officer, Information Commission, RTI Application

1. Introduction

Does a democratic society's effective functioning depend on the free flow of information? In 2005, the Right to Information Act (RTI) was passed in India to provide its citizens more and free access to what was previously only considered 'governmental information' so that the government would be more responsive and transparent. Implementing this Act is regarded as a significant step in enhancing India's democratic stand because it increases the transparency

and accountability of the government. The RTI is not a new concept in the Indian legislature because the judiciary has emphasised the basic scheme of this act through time, and only after the judiciary established it as a fundamental right under Article 19 (1)(a) of the Constitution, this Act was passed. Since democracy is a system of government run by the people's representatives, it is crucial for the citizens who were promised good governance to have the right to information to avoid the government's arbitrary exercise of discretionary power.

In this paper, the author will talk about the situation preceding the commencement of the Act and the case laws that made the legislation a reality. The main focus of this paper will be examining the ambiguities in the Act and how it has impacted the accountability and transparency of India's administrative decisions - is it a positive or a negative impact or somewhere in the middle with room for progressive development based on case laws and other incidents that have happened since the commencement of the Act till now. The paper will then further dive into the role of media concerning the Act and the hindrances which affect the effective implementation of the Act, also providing some suggestions to improve the efficiency of the Act.

2. Literature Review

In the previous research on the Right to Information Act, written by Dharanisha S Ton 'Implementation Of Right To Information And Impact On Administration: A Case Study of Collegiate Education and Revenue Departments in Karnataka' the main focus of the study has been on the impact of the implementation of RTI in Aided degree colleges and Government degree colleges in the Collegiate Education Department and District and Taluk administration under the Revenue Departments. She has approached the topic with secondary database methodology and focuses the institutional aspects of application of this act. The part where the author talks about how the negative impact of RTI on administration has created a lack of confidence in people is the most relevant to our study. The author concluded that RTI is an effective instrument in promoting the administration's transparency. Still, the proper services have yet to reach the public under the Act due to the lack of awareness.

Another journal article, written by Smita Srivastava on 'The Right to Information in India: Implementation and Impact', focuses on the implementation process and the procedural aspects of the RTI Act. The study maps out the Act's before and after effects, which are relevant to our study.

The paper 'Right To Information Act: A Tool For Good Governance' by Rouf Ahmad Bhat emphasises the role of RTI in good governance and that RTI helps promote democratic ideology. In the paper written by Twinkle Shaji on 'A Revolutionary Move: The Right to Information Act, 2005', a comparison between similar foreign legislations and RTI has been drawn to check the functionality of the Act. The paper concluded similarly to Dharanisha's work by stating that people lack awareness of how to use this right despite the right being granted to people after so many struggles.

In a journal article by Pushpraj Singh on 'Fifteen Years Of Right To Information Act In India: A Long Way To Go', the history of the RTI Act is explained along with the procedural aspects of the Act. The paper also talks about the current challenges faced by the Act. It suggests that government officials under the act must be trained based on the rules and recent judgments to increase efficiency. It also suggests teaching the RTI as a part of the curriculum to make the youth aware of their rights under this act.

The main areas of debate under the RTI Act have always been about the efficiency of its implementation, the lack of awareness among the public on how to avail their rights, and the lack of training of the public officers under the act and how its acts detrimental to the objectives of the Act.

The existing gap is that there has been significantly less extensive study on the ambiguity in the wording of the Act, the political hindrances faced by the Act in its implementation, and there is a thin knowledge of how the judicial judgment has facilitated or hindered the functioning of the Act. This paper aims to address all those existing gaps to a possible extent.

3. Objectives of the study

The objectives of the paper are;

- To examine the legislative ambiguity and gaps in the Right to Information Act, 2005 and its effect on the government.
- To explore the case laws and case studies which illustrate the Act's effect on the government's transparency and accountability.
- To identify the socio-political hindrance faced in implementing the Right to Information Act.

- To assess the role of Media in exploiting the Right to Information Act to hold government authorities accountable.
- To provide suggestions for reforms or enhancement to further improve the efficiency of the Right to Information Act.

4. Research Methodology

This paper involves the analysis of secondary data sources to analyse the impact of the implementation of the Right to Information Act on the accountability and transparency of the administrative decisions of the government based on various statistics published by the Government, soft copies of departmental annual reports of RTI, judgements of Municipal Courts, High courts and Supreme Court. Other secondary sources such as newspaper articles, published journal articles, books on administrative law and statutes and website data were taken into consideration for analysing the hindrances faced by the Act in its implementation.

5. Analysis

5.1 What Is The RTI Act And Its Significance?

The Right to Information Act, grants the Indian citizens access to governmental records and information leading to the people of the country engaging in the governance indirectly and leading to the development of the country inclusive of its citizens. The main reason behind implementing the Act was that despite India being a democratic government the administrative functioning of the government was not transparent but opaque. In order to clear all the built-up fog and create a transparent operation of government entities where the ordinary citizens have knowledge about how the administrative or departmental choices are and how the resources are used by the government. The RTI Act has so far played a critical role in the governance of the country and has sparked quite a social revolution¹.

The Act was mainly introduced to hold the government officials accountable towards the general public and encourage the ordinary citizens to participate in the decisions making process of the government leading to collaboration between them. This transparency would also lead to reduction to corruption since the financial information held by any governmental authority was made accessible to public. This Act acts as a system of checks and balances in

¹ Kartik Kachhawah, Right to Information Act: A Multi-Dimensional Approach towards Good Governance, LAWCTOPUS, (November 13, 2015), <https://www.lawctopus.com/academike/right-to-information-act/>

the democracy government by making the government fear the leak of corrupt information and instilling a sense of accountability towards the public.

The basic objective of the Act is to 'empower the citizens' to promote 'promote transparency and accountability' in the working of the Government, 'contain corruption', and make our 'democracy work for the people' in real sense².

5.2 Situation preceding the commencement of the Act

The RTI Act is a step taken by the government towards a rudimentary goal of great importance to democracy. The demand to know the so called 'inside information' of the administration of the government began in the late 1990's. In Rajasthan, the workers belonging to the Association for the Empowerment of Labourers and Farmers were the forerunners of this idea of right to know. These workers demanded to know what was the budget allocated by the government for the development work because they faced wage disparity. They had no motive to raise their wages, but they simply wanted to hold the government accountable for its corrupt practices.

Before a central legislation could be passed on this account, nine states had already passed legislations enabling their people with the right to know the information about the authorities of their state.

Over the years, before the enactment of this Act, the SC has consistently ruled in favour the citizens right to information. The nature of this was such that is not absolute and constraint shall be applicable to it. The point of debate in the court have been regarding the constraint that shall be applicable to the right.

The legislative development of this Act started when press petitions were filed before the Supreme Court challenging the government orders for newsprint control, bans on paper distribution and seeking logistics regarding it.

In the case of *Indira Gandhi v. Raj Narain*³, the SC specified that it is a fundamental responsibility of the officials to justify and explain the actions carried out by them in exercise of their public function and that is a safeguard against oppression and corruption. The court

² ABOUT RIGHT TO INFORMATION, 2005, <https://rti.gov.in/> (last visited 30th September March, 2023)

³ Indira Gandhi v Raj Narain, 1975 SCC (2) 159 (India)

also added that covering everyday business of the government with a veil of secrecy is not of public interest.

In the case of *State of UP v Raj Narain*⁴, the supreme court held 'right to know' is an inherent right under Article 19 (1) (a). The court stated that in a responsible government like ours, every action carried out by a public employee in a public manner must be known by the people of the land and for such functions the employee must also be held accountable. The court also added that the citizens have the right to know the specifics of every public transaction. Justice KK Mathew also stated that this right is not absolute and there shall be an exemption made when secrecy is claimed by the government regarding transactions that have no impact or bearing on public security. When this judgment was given, India had just gotten out of two wards and information was precious to its governance and ordering for public disclosure of such information is a very bold move and it shows the progressive thought of the judiciary which existed during that period and the lack of it now.

In the case of *SP Gupta v. Union of India*⁵, the court describes that the right to know about the facts of every public transaction is vested with the people. In this case, Justice Bhagwati stated that "There can be little doubt that exposure to 'public gaze and scrutiny' is one of the surest means of achieving a 'clean and healthy administration'"

In the case of *Union of India v. Association for Democratic Reforms*⁶, the SC held that the right of a voter to know about a candidate standing for election falls under Article 19(1)(a), But the problem was that, though the judiciary recognised the right through the above cases, the people could not access the right because there was no standard procedure. Due to lack of Action from the government, the protest that started in Rajasthan grew into a protest of national interest and became to be known as the RTI movement. The slogan of this movement was, 'the right to know, is the right to live'⁷.

With the enactment of the Official Secret Act, 1923 the government denied to release the information termed by it as "confidential", which was considered a blow to the functioning of the government basically wedded to democracy and transparency. After all these struggles, the central legislation of Freedom of Information Act was enacted in 2002. But this act was highly criticised because this Act did not provide any penalties upon non-compliance with the rules

⁴ State Of U.P vs Raj Narain & Ors, (1975) 3 SCR 333 (India)

⁵ S.P. Gupta v. Union of India, (1982) 2 SCR 365 (India)

⁶ Union of India v. Association for Democratic Reforms, (1982) 2 SCR 365 (India)

⁷ Twinkle Shaji, *A Revolutionary Move: The Right to Information Act*, 2005, 4 IJLMH 2861, 2865-2868 (2021)

and procedures of the Act. This Act was simply a shell of what was promised to the public and did not live upto its much-anticipated effect. After facing heavy criticism from the public, the RTI Act was finally implemented in 2005, by the legislature.

5.3 Examining the Ambiguities of the Act and its Impact

To understand the paper, one must first have knowledge about the elements of accountability which are; answerability, enforcement and responsiveness. Transparency of information is required to demand accountability.

As per Section 4 of the Act, the government departments, have to Suo motto disclose certain information. By a study by RAAG a non- governmental organisation it has been found that 50% of the RTI applications are made due to the failure of the obligation of the government under Section 4⁸. There is no provision in the Act which condemns unwarranted delay in performing the duties under the act by asking for bribes and as per the above-mentioned study, 25% of the applications seek information regarding delay in the processing of government identity cards for which government has not yet replied properly.

Section 8(1)(j) of the Act states that when a third party seeks 'personal information' about another person it would amount to intrusion of privacy and thus exempted from the purview of the Act. The CIC has defined intrusion of privacy but has not defined personal information and this term is being very liberally interpreted and its scope is being widened to protect the personal interest of the authorities. Thus, to create a balance between both fundamental rights of right to privacy and right to information, it is imminent to clearly define what falls under personal information and what does not.

Under Section 26, the Act places responsibility on the 'appropriate government' to prepare programmes with the help of finances available to create awareness among the citizens about the existence of the right to information and how such right can be accessed. With the growing popularity of the internet era, this section might feel irrelevant. But India with agriculture and villages as the backbone of its economy, cannot deem the section to be irrelevant.

⁸ Shailesh Gandhi, Will the Right to Information Act Become the Right to Denial of Information Act?, LEAFLET, (December 9, 2020), <https://theleaflet.in/will-the-right-to-information-act-become-the-right-to-denial-of-information-act/#:~:text=The%20law%20has%20strong%20provisions,of%20Section%208%20or%209.>

But so far due to the lack of steps taken by government to create awareness regarding this, it is not only the people in the villages who live in the dark without knowing their rights, it is also the people who live in the urban areas who remain unaware about this right being available to them. The lack of enforcement of this section acts as a deterrent to the general scheme of the Act.

Then one of the most undesirable provisions of the Action comes in the form of Section 23 where it puts a bar on the jurisdiction of courts to review any order passed under the authority of the Act. This increases the wide discretion of the administrative authorities and enables to act arbitrarily or deny the information on baseless grounds due to the absence of checks and balance system in the form of judicial review.

It is seen that what with the frequent denial of information by the judicial decisions, there is a huge proportional difference between the number of RTI applications filed and the amount of information that is actually given out to the public. These applications are simply rejected on the ground that it does not fall under the term 'public authorities' under the Act, and it is accepted by people because of the inefficiency of the government in creating awareness about how to properly use the right. Also, Section 123 of the Indian Evidence Act, entitles the government to withhold information with regards to some unpublished official records with regards to the matters of the State which is also abused by the authorities to deny information to the people. To put it simply the demand for information outweighs the supply⁹.

The Indian governance and Constitution has several aspects of 'Rule of Law' incorporated into it and it also strictly follows the concept of natural justice both of which advocate that a man shall not be a judge in his own case. But under this act, when a citizen feels that his application was rejected without proper evaluation such appeal lies to the administrative authority himself and it is such authorities who also impose the penalties, all which is completely against natural justice and rule of law which our justice system religiously follows.

As per the preamble of the Act, this Act tries to establish a harmony between the people's right to information and the State's security in the light of which twenty-five government agencies are exempt from the purview of this Act. This could cause a hindrance to the objective of the

⁹ KEY ISSUES AND CONSTRAINTS IN IMPLEMENTING THE RTI ACT, https://rti.gov.in/rticorner/studybypwc/key_issues.pdf (last accessed 30th September, 2023)

Act, but with the nation's security secrets already being leaked having such information freely accessible could lead to national threat so such exemption are justifiable to an extent. Immediately following the implementation of the Act, when army refused to grant information despite not being one of the agencies exempted by the Act, the then PM intervened and stated that Army shall not refuse to share information unless entitled to refuse by a government notification.

5.4 Impact of Procedural Irregularities under the Act

For the functioning of the Act, there has to be an Information Commission set up and PIO (Public Information Officer) at the centre and state levels. But the set-up commission is not efficient and only hear almost 3 - 4 cases a day. The officers have a lethargic attitude and the applications and files are not maintained properly and are often lost. Even when found guilty the Commissioners don't impose penalty on officers due to bias and this causes the PIO under the Act to refuse sharing the information at the very base level.

The CIC most often passes order without even hearing both sides, and out of over 2000 cases decided by CIC only 6% have imposed penalties¹⁰. Every day almost 4,800 applications are filed across India. The study by the Economic Times, 2016 point out that the actual number of RTI applications filed might be actually higher than accounted for since many authorities do not properly file an annual report as per Section 25 of the Act.

In villages, the village secretaries are supposed to function as the information officers but as per the statement given by State Information Commissioner of Andhra Pradesh, in numerous villages it is the village sarpanch who function as IOs which is blatant violation of law. Indian Express in 2008 stated in an article that, the SIO of UP expressed that a lot of cases are pending due to the lack of staff like data operator or web designer. There have been cases where people who file applications under the Act were bullied and extorted. There was a case in Bihar where a activist was extorted a sum of Rs. 78,21,252 by the supply officer to provide information on distribution of food grain and kerosene under the Public Distribution System (PDS) in Bihar.

On the other hand, there have also been positive impacts of RTI when in 2007 a scam of Rs.6000 Crores was prevented by data obtained by citizens under the RTI Act to question the

¹⁰ Kejriwal Arvind, "RTI Act, One Year of Unfreedom", Combat Law Magazine March 1 2007, www.doccentre.org/.../DP-LR-issuewise-articles-AH1.php accessed on 3.7.10

elected representatives. The RTI has also now been made to work hand in hand with the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA)¹¹.

5.5 Judicial interpretation of the Act

Although Section 23 puts a bar on the jurisdiction of the court, the provisions of the Act are still subject to judicial review under Article 13 of the Constitution.

In the case of Secretary General, Supreme Court of India v. Subhash Chandra Agarwal¹², the petition was filed to Central Information Commission (CIC) seeking information of the funding of major political parties and whether or not they have followed up on their election manifestos. The Delhi HC, in this case took a liberal interpretation of the term 'public authorities' under section 2(h) of the Act to include political parties and directed the CIC to assign CPIO to give out answers to the RTI applications. In this case the judge also pointed out that this right to information does not only arise from the statute but from the many judgments passed before the commencement of the Act. However, by an amendment in 2013 political parties have been removed from the purview of public authorities under the Act.

In the case of the CPIO, Supreme Court of India v. Subhash Chandra Agarwal & Anr¹³, the petition was filed to know information about the Collegium decision making process of appointment to SC. The Delhi HC held that Chief Justice of India is a public authority under the RTI Act and that CJI was not a separate entity.

In the case of Reserve Bank of India v. Jayantilal Mistry¹⁴, the issue was whether RBI and other banks deny information on the grounds of economic interest commercial confidence and fiduciary relationship with another Bank. The court in this case held that the RBI has to act in public interest and it is RBI's statutory duty to comply with the provisions of the Act. The court also stated that RBI cannot claim the ground of fiduciary relationship since it does not deal with other financial institutions on the pretext of trust.

¹¹ Smita Srivastava, The Right to Information in India: Implementation and Impact, 1 AAJSS, 2229, 2235-2240 (2010)

¹² Secretary General, Supreme Court of India v. Subhash Chandra Agarwal, Civil Appeal No. 10045 of 2010 (India)

¹³ The CPIO, Supreme Court of India v. Subhash Chandra Agarwal & Anr., Civil Appeal No. 10044 of 2010, judgment pronounced on 13-11-19 (India)

¹⁴ Reserve Bank of India v. Jayantilal Mistry, Transferred Case (Civil) No. 91 OF 2015 (India)

Despite these progressive judgements, many court pronouncements in the past decade has restricted the scope of this fundamental as well as statutory right. When a writ petition is filed before the HC challenging the decisions of CIC, in most of the cases a stay is obtained ex-parte. The act under Section 22 provides that this Act shall have overriding effect to all previous laws and also states that no information shall be denied except for those matters mentioned under Section 8 and 9 of the Act.

The judgments by SC in the recent years have stated that Section 8 of the Act provides exception to Section 3 of the Act which provides right to information and so Section 8 must be interpreted in a narrow and strict manner (*Central Board Of Secondary Education vs Aditya Bandopadhyay*). In the same judgment another strong statement was given; "The nation does not want a scenario where 75% of the staff of public authorities spends 75% of their time in collecting and furnishing information to applicants instead of discharging their regular duties"¹⁵ In the case of *Girish Ramchandra Deshpande Vs. Central Information Commission & Ors*¹⁶, the Court exempted copies of all memos, show cause notices and orders of censure/punishment, assets, income returns, details of gifts received by a public servant from the purview of the Act by bringing them under the exemptions provided under Section 8 by classifying them as 'personal information.' This is in contrary to the late 1990's judgments of SC where it was strongly held by the court that privacy cannot be claimed by public servants for personal information on public records. This judgement has deviated from the proviso clause of Section 8 (1) (j).

5.6 Other Socio-political Hindrances faced in the Act's Implementation

The 2020 pandemic brought forth a major failure of the information regime. The data on number of migrant workers being affected by the pandemic, Covid-19 treatment centres and decision-making process of the administration regarding the PPE kits were all not made available in the public domain through website portals like it should have and any effort made by the public to obtain the information was also curbed by the authorities so as to hide the inefficiency of the ruling government. During the pandemic, instead of making the citizens get the manipulated news through TV channels and newspapers it should have been made available to the public by RTI and even more so if an application has been specifically filed for it.

¹⁵ Central Board Of Secondary Education vs Aditya Bandopadhyay, Appeal No. 6454 of 2011 (India)

¹⁶ Girish Ramchandra Deshpande Vs. Central Information Commission & Ors, Special Leave Petition (Civil) No. 27734 of 2012 (India)

Another political hindrance of RTI came in the form of PM Cares Fund. Any information regarding the fund was denied by stating that it does not fall under the purview of public authority under the Act, although the fund is supposed to be exclusively utilised for the wellbeing of the people during crisis. This is nothing but an escape tactic by the ruling government. Several State ICs did not function during the pandemic and although CIC functioned through video calls, with the retirement of the Chief Information Commissioner in August 2020, made the CIC also useless. The ruling government failed to provide proper online facilities to the functioning SIC to hear matters on a priority basis.

There has been an increase in the number of attacks on the RTI Activists who take it upon themselves to clean the corrupt system of public administration in India. Amit Jethgwa, an RTI Activist was shot dead near Gujarat HC when he fought against the mining mafia in Gir Forests¹⁷.

There is also no protection to RTI officers under the Act and they are often harassed for acting as whistleblowers when in reality they are only performing their duties under the Act. This was clearly seen when Satyendra Dubet, who was the project director of NHAI was killed in Bihar and Manjunath Shammugham, an Indian Oil Corporation sales manager was killed for exposing the involvement of mafia in adulteration of petrol. This is one of the reasons why 30% of the information obtained under the Act is often misleading or incomplete. There is no mechanism to check whether the applicant got the information within 30 days and if such information is legitimate.

5.7 Role of Media in exploiting the rights under the Act

Apart from aiding the citizens, the RTI will also enable the media to be more entitled to ask questions to the government regarding its current state of affairs. It also helps the media get information from legitimate sources rather than depending upon rumours and leaks. With the information available to the citizens at large, even an individual can take up journalism and this is often called as “citizen journalism¹⁸.”

The Press Council in March 2001, stated that a legislation on Right to Information Legislation is vital for the media because at that time media faced the issue of getting access to official

¹⁷ Pushparaj Singh, Fifteen Years of Right to Information Act in India: A Long Way to Go, 17 TAOHRJ 346, 356–360 (2021)

¹⁸ Bhushita Sharma et al, Right To Information And Media – Indian Perspective, 4 IJLLR 2582, 2587 (2022)

information and it affected the investigative, analytical and popular journalism.

In the case of *Secretary, Ministry of I & B, Government of India v Cricket Association of Bengal*¹⁹, it was held by the SC that Freedom of speech and expression includes right to acquire information and to disseminate it. Thus, emphasising on the media's right to use RTI professionally.

Media is one such entity that actually takes full advantage of RTI which is a very powerful weapon in its hands. Under the Act, the media can demand data regarding any of the governmental department, photocopies of government contracts and payment estimates, certified samples of material used in the construction of roads, drains, buildings, status of requests or complaints, details of time delays, actions taken on information, communications and decisions.

However, while publishing any such information and playing the role of a bridge between the citizens and the government as the 4th pillar the media has to always follow the constitutional mandate and ethical code of conduct of media bodies strictly, failure of which is punishable under Indian Penal Code.

When NDTV broadcasted 'private information' which lead to the Pathankot terror attack in 2016, the I&B ministry prohibited the transmission of the channel for one day in India. This shows that RTI when it comes to media is not absolute and the media has to be even more responsible when dealing with sensitive information.

When there arose a conflict between RTI and the Official Secret Act 1923, the SC held in favour of RTI with the interest of public at large. In this case, 'THE HINDU' newspaper leaked the photographs of agreement between the two countries regarding the purchase of rafale aircraft fighter jets. The Court held that though illegally obtained the classified document can be placed before court and shall not be protected under the Official Secret Act.

¹⁹ Secretary, Ministry of I & B, Government of India v Cricket Association of Bengal, 1995 2 SCC 161(India)

6. Suggestions and Conclusion

The public records system has to be reorganised so that it is much easier to provide the information sought for under the RTI Act and an authority to monitor these records must be set up at municipal and state levels. The CIC members must be appointed from a non-administrative or civil service background with field knowledge to avoid biases. The government with support of educational institutions and NGOs should educate the youth and public about how to access their rights under this Act because as per statistics only 10% of our land's population have knowledge about the RTI Act. The scope of the Act must be made clear that it extends to all three wings of the government including the functioning of the judiciary. The PIO has to be put through a dedicated training programme before their appointment to polish their skills. The appeal system must be made time bound.

The implementation of this Act is one of the most radical actions taken by the legislature in the recent history. This Act aids in good governance of the government and has led to increased trust between the government and the people of the land. This Indian legislation is applauded for being at par or for being better than many world legislations with the Act's main scheme being that there is no democracy without informed citizens. An RTI regime can enable the media to evidence-based and factual reporting on important issues in relation to public interest. It can help the media to expose defects in administration and corruption. On the other hand, it is much more important that the media plays the role of an honest broker of information without any favouritism.

No matter how progressive the intent of the legislation is, if it is not implemented properly and if it is not allowed to function in its proper capacity, the legislation is nothing but a piece of paper. A transparent government is a dream that within hands reach through this legislation. But owing to people's ignorance the government is trying its best to limit the scope and applicability of the act through its action which remain undisputed.

7. References

Statutes

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