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# **“RIGHT TO INFORMATION, ARTICLE 19, AND DEMOCRACY: FOSTERING TRANSPARENCY, ACCOUNTABILITY AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT”**

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## **Abstract**

*India is a federal secular parliamentary democratic republic. It is one of the largest democracies in the world which became a democratic nation post-independence in the year 1947. One of the inherent aspects of any democracy is the citizen's freedom to express their views and the right to get information relating to the functioning of the government to enhance the responsiveness and accountability of the functioning of the government. Accountability and transparency are the two sides of the concept of democracy. The Constitution of India is the supreme law of the land, the preamble of the constitution itself ensures the citizens of the country 'liberty' which refers to the people having political views and behavior in the society. The Constitution affirms Fundamental rights, a set of basic and unalienable rights enshrined under Part III. Article 19 (1) (a) of the Constitution of India guarantees all its citizens the right to freedom of speech and expression<sup>1</sup>. The right to freedom of speech and expression includes the right to express one's opinions, seek information and ideas, and receive and impart information. The legislation of the RTI Act, of 2005 is a strong weapon in the hands of the citizens to ensure transparency in the government and strengthen democracy. This legislation ensures good governance in the country and gives the citizens the inherent ability to strengthen participatory democracy. This research paper studies the impacts of the right to information in relation to the strengthening of democracy in India.*

**KEYWORDS:** Accountability and Transparency, Article 19 (1) (a), Democracy, Fundamental rights and Right to Information

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<sup>1</sup> The Indian Constitution, 1950

## Introduction

Recognizing the fundamental importance of access to information to democratic participation, to holding governments accountable and to controlling corruption, as well as to personal dignity and business efficiency, [we declare that] the right to access information held by public authorities is a fundamental human right which should be given effect at the national level through comprehensive legislation based on the principle of maximum disclosure, establishing a presumption that all information is accessible subject only to a narrow system of exceptions.

- UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Expression, 2004<sup>2</sup>

Right to Information has gained a massive amount of importance in current times and is considered to be one of the strongest weapons in the hands of the citizens of a democratic country such as India. In the present times, knowledge is the most important resource, and our Right to know uncovers the veils of secrecy that restrict citizens from knowing about the working of public authorities. The Right to Information ensures accountability and transparency of the government's work and also allows citizens to actively participate in the democratic setup. The right to know promotes democratic decision-making and enlarges the rights of ordinary citizens. Fundamental rights enshrined under Part III of the Indian Constitution are a set of basic and unalienable rights available to all the citizens of the country. The right to Information subtly forms a part of fundamental rights guaranteed by the Constitution of India. Under Article 21 of the constitution the 'Right to life and personal liberty' includes a range of construed rights and elements. There are several of them in Article 19 as well. The Right to know is considered to be a necessary ingredient of participatory democracy. Over the years the right to know has evolved to become the most effective means to serve a number of societal interests. Equipped with information citizens can stand on an equal footing serving the purpose of accountability and transparency necessary in any democratic setup.

Democracy in material terms requires the public to act as a self-governing force. Abraham Lincoln in his famous Gettysburg Address said that "democracy is the government of the people, for the people and by the people". This notion can be achieved only by an well-versed citizenry.<sup>3</sup> The Right to Information Act, 2005 is the legislation that applies to the whole of the

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<sup>2</sup> THE RIGHT TO INFORMATION: STRENGTHENING DEMOCRACY AND DEVELOPMENT. (n.d.). Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative.

<sup>3</sup> Singh., Right to Information: The Basic Need of Democracy, JOURNAL OF EDUCATION & SOCIAL POLICY, vol.1(No.2), [https://www.jespnnet.com/journals/Vol\\_1\\_No\\_2\\_December\\_2014/13.pdf](https://www.jespnnet.com/journals/Vol_1_No_2_December_2014/13.pdf)

country apart from the State of J&K w.e.f 15th June 2005. It is the culmination of responses generated for the right to know. The Supreme Court and High Courts from 1997 onwards in several landmark judgments, observed that Articles 19(1) and 21 of the Constitution of India interpreted the Right to freedom of speech and expression and the Right to life and liberty to include the Right to Information. The preamble of the Constitution has been widely recognized as an inevitability by way of commitment to the conception of an informed populace, to contain corruption and enhance accountability and openness in how each governmental authority operates.<sup>4</sup>

Access to true and fair information held by any public authority was not possible before the coming of this legislation in the year 2005. Non-accountability for the functioning of the public authorities and abuse of power was the order of the day. Government functions when done in confidentiality lead to processes being hidden from the public's scrutiny, which can lead to oppression and corruption by the government. To avoid the abuse of the powers of the government Right to know is very essential. With the coming of the RTI Act of 2005, the purposes of the development of participatory democracy can very easily be realized. The legislation ensures the other purposes of good governance, transparency, and accountability in a country like India.

### **Advancement and Growth of the Right to Information in India**

The right to information has not been expressly mentioned in any part of the Constitution but has been derived from Article 19 (1) (a) and Article 21 of the Constitution over the years. Article 19 (1) (a) of the Constitution relates to the most fundamental of all freedoms which is the freedom of speech and expression, with this right comes the inherent right to know which has been interpreted from the article. The Right to information and its recognition as an essential right of a citizen came to the country in stages starting from conflict in disclosing any information, to state-level Right to information acts, to a roughly made, protective of public authorities Freedom of Information Act in 2002 and finally the Act of 2005.<sup>5</sup>

Knowledge is the biggest tool in any democratic country and seeking knowledge requires

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<sup>4</sup> India, legal Service, "Right to Know and Right to Information." Legal Service India. Accessed July 29, 2023. <https://www.legalserviceindia.com/article/188-Right-To-Information.html>.

<sup>5</sup> Evolution and Development of the Right to Information Act in India. (n.d.). Legal Service India. Retrieved July 30, 2023, from [https://www.legalserviceindia.com/legal/article-323-evolution-and-development-of-the-right-to-information-act-in-india.html#google\\_vignette](https://www.legalserviceindia.com/legal/article-323-evolution-and-development-of-the-right-to-information-act-in-india.html#google_vignette)



information that enables and empowers people towards exercising their legal, political, economic, and social rights. Free flow of information and making information accessible is one of the essentials of any participatory democracy. The Right to Information Bill was passed by the Prime Minister of India, Dr. Manmohan Singh as a significant step towards anti-corruption which said:

"The passage of the Bill will serve as the beginning of a new era in our governance processes, an era of performance and efficiency, benefits of growth will flow to all segments of society, eliminate the pervasive problem of corruption, and bring the concerns of the common man to the centre of all governance processes, fulfilling the hopes of the founding fathers of our Republic."<sup>6</sup>

Corruption, activism, Modernization, and the Information Society were the factors leading to the enactment of the Right to Information Act in the year 2005. With the internal factors involved in the process of enactment of the Legislation in India which evolved within the country itself, there were external factors that evolved Internationally in the form of International Legal Instruments. First, was the Adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) in the year 1948 which provided everyone the freedom to access information through any means and without respect to borders. The second was the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), which was signed in 1996 and guarantees everyone's right to freedom of expression and the ability to receive and disseminate information of any sort.<sup>7</sup>

### **The Right to Information Act of 2005**

The Right to Information Act of 2005 is a welfare legislation that aims to meet the purposes of democracy. The law was passed by the Parliament on 15<sup>th</sup> June 2005 which aims to ensure transparency and accountability. "The Act strives to encourage accountability and transparency. According to the legislation, public authorities are required to give citizens the information they request."<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Evolution and Development of the Right to Information Act in India. (n.d.). Legal Service India. Retrieved July 30, 2023, from [https://www.legalserviceindia.com/legal/article-323-evolution-and-development-of-the-right-to-information-act-in-india.html#google\\_vignette](https://www.legalserviceindia.com/legal/article-323-evolution-and-development-of-the-right-to-information-act-in-india.html#google_vignette)

<sup>7</sup> The Right to Information Act 2005- Historical Background and Key Objectives. (2021, November 16). Adda247. <https://www.adda247.com/upsc-exam/the-right-to-information-act-2005-historical-background-and-key-objectives/>

<sup>8</sup> Right to Information Act', Wikipedia, the encyclopaedia of Social Sciences, 11 October, 2010.

Information includes material of almost all types and forms including documents, memos, e-mails, circulars, press releases, orders, contracts, reports, etc. The Act applies to all public authorities whether owned, controlled, or financed by the Central or the State government. Every public authority is obliged to publish and disseminate certain information asked or demanded by any person. The Act also puts into place a supervising authority in the form of the Central Information Commission (CIC) and the State Information Commission in every State.

The Objectives enumerated in the Act, are doubtlessly ideal. Its implementation requires replacing a culture of official secrecy and control with one of openness and participation. It requires a “paradigm shift for the governing machinery towards an open government and open administrative system in the country.”<sup>9</sup> The Act diminishes the Official Secrets Act of 1889 which was amended in 1923 and various other legislations that restricted the disclosure of information in India.

The Act mandates that all public authorities computerize their records for the widespread distribution and proactively disseminate specific types of information so that citizens have the fewest options when making formal requests for information including the particulars of its organization, functions, and duties; powers, and duties of its officers and employees; procedure followed in the decision-making process; norms set for discharge of its functions; rules, regulations, instructions, manuals, and records, held by it or under its control or used by its employees for discharging its functions; etc.<sup>10</sup>

Right to Information (Amendment) Act, 2019: The Right to Information Act of the year 2005 was amended in the year 2019. With this amendment in order for the Central Information Commissioners (CICs) and State Information Commissioners in the States to operate independently and effectively, their position has been elevated to that of Election Commissioners and Chief Secretaries, respectively. The amendment gives the federal government the authority to unilaterally choose the tenure, pay, benefits, and other conditions

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<sup>9</sup> Khanwalker. (2011, April). THE RIGHT TO INFORMATION ACT IN INDIA: ITS CONNOTATIONS AND IMPLEMENTATION. The Indian Journal of Political Science, Vol. 72(No. 2 (April-June, 2011)), 387–393. [https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/42761423.pdf?refreqid=fastly-default%3Aa814dbfb4c910f240c5788c94d19d505&ab\\_segments=0%2Fbasic\\_search\\_gsv2%2Fcontrol&origin=&initiator=search-results&acceptTC=1](https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/42761423.pdf?refreqid=fastly-default%3Aa814dbfb4c910f240c5788c94d19d505&ab_segments=0%2Fbasic_search_gsv2%2Fcontrol&origin=&initiator=search-results&acceptTC=1)

<sup>10</sup> Phogat. (2018, January 1). Article 19 (1)(a) of Indian Constitution and Right to Information Act, 2005. 2018 IJCRT, Vol. 6(Issue 1). <https://ijcrt.org/papers/IJCRT1705091.pdf>

of employment for information commissioners both at the federal level and at the state level. The amendment was criticized since an independent commission now came under the Central Government. This pulls to pieces the structure of transparency that was incorporated through the Act of 2005.<sup>11</sup>

### **The Need for the Right to Information**

Reliable and accessible information is very crucial for all aspects of any transparent and open government, particularly in times when there exists propagation of fake news and misinformation. There is an urgent need for reliable facts about government decisions and actions for public accountability and economic and social development.<sup>12</sup> In democratic discourse, the freedom of information has become more and more important. The Right to information includes two key concepts those are:

- The public's right to access information and the government's obligation to comply with the request;
- The duty of the government to proactively provide certain key information, even in the absence of a request.<sup>13</sup>

The legislation in force which is the Right to Information Act of 2005 sets a clear framework to place systems and create cultures of openness in the country. There are certain principles that govern the Right to Information Act of 2005 such as:

- The principle of Maximum Disclosure of all true and fair information that the public has the right to access in accordance with the law. To ensure a participatory democracy information shall be made accessible to the people to allow public scrutiny. This ensures an active involvement of the public in the working of the government which also ensures good governance in the country.
- Principle of Minimum Exemptions that suggests that non-disclosures of the information shall be minimal to ensure the overall public interest. Exemptions shall allow the non-disclosure of information that would cause serious harm to national security,

<sup>11</sup> RTI Amendment Bill 2019. (2019, July 22). Drishti IAS. Retrieved August 10, 2023, from <https://www.drishtiias.com/daily-news-editorials/rti-amendment-bill-2019>

<sup>12</sup> Lemieux, V. (2020). Transparency in the 21st century: the role of records in achieving public access to information, protecting fundamental freedoms and monitoring sustainable development. In A. Thurston (Ed.), *A Matter of Trust: Building Integrity into Data, Statistics and Records to Support the Achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals* (pp. 173–188). University of London Press. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctv14t45v5.16>

<sup>13</sup> THE RIGHT TO INFORMATION: STRENGTHENING DEMOCRACY AND DEVELOPMENT. (n.d.). Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative.

international relations, legitimate law enforcement activities, or a fair trial, or other accessible information shall not have exemptions relating to the non-disclosure.

RTI Act aims to create an empowering environment where citizens and government have two-way communication. It enables the public to be aware of the functioning of the government which ultimately contributes to them being involved in devising policies. It correspondingly creates an open, effective, and transparent government in the country. A better-informed citizenry is well-equipped to scrutinize and advance the functioning of the government machinery. According to the Supreme Court, the office of the Chief Justice of India (CJI) should be transparent and accountable because it is a public authority under the Right to Information (RTI) Act. The judiciary's transparency was affected by this decision in the case of Central Public Information Officer, Supreme Court of India v. Subhash Chandra Aggarwal.<sup>14</sup>

The Supreme Court maintained the public's right to learn about the criminal histories of politicians running for office, declaring that political parties must make their candidates' criminal histories public. This ruling attempted to improve political accountability and openness adjudged in Union of India v. Association for Democratic Reforms.<sup>15</sup>

### **Constitutional Perspective of the Right to Information**

Right to Information plays a vital role in a country like India, though not directly mentioned as a fundamental right under Part III of the constitution it is indirectly interpreted as a fundamental right. The Right to information has been considered a part of Part III of the constitution under Article 19(1)(a) i.e.; Freedom of speech and expression, considered the lifeblood of democracy. The protection of any citizen's rights and liberties is considered to be one of the paramount duties of the State. In the case of Shreya Singhal v. Union of India<sup>16</sup>, the Information Technology Act of 2000's Section 66A was ruled unlawful by the Supreme Court of India because it infringed upon the freedom of speech and expression protected by the Indian Constitution.

Parts III and IV of the Indian Constitution, as well as Articles 23 and 25 of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights serve as the foundational principles of democracy. In this regard,

<sup>14</sup> Central Public Information Officer, Supreme Court of India v. Subhash Chandra Aggarwal, (LPA 501 of 2009).

<sup>15</sup> Union of India v. Association for Democratic Reforms, (2002 AIR 2112).

<sup>16</sup> Shreya Singhal v. Union of India, AIR 2015 SC 1523.

the constitutional protections for freedom of speech and expression include the right to information.<sup>17</sup> In *Chairman, Railway Board v. Chandrima Das*<sup>18</sup>, the Supreme Court stated that "the applicability of Universal Declaration of Human Rights and principals thereof may have to be read, it needs to, into the domestic jurisprudence." It examines the occasions that hastened the 2005 Act's approval, giving our nation's citizens a crucial tool to guarantee transparency in governance. The concept of democracy in India is enshrined in the Preamble to the Constitution of India wherein opening words provide that "We, the People of India "and in the end it lays down" give to ourselves this Constitution".<sup>19</sup>

The direction towards the recognition of RTI within the constitutional ambit incepted right from the judgement in *Hamdard Dawakhana v. Union of India*.<sup>20</sup> RTI was officially considered a component of Article 19 (1) (a) by the Supreme Court in *Bennett Coleman v. Union of India*<sup>21</sup>. The Supreme court in *K. v. Secretary of State for the Home Department Ex. P. Simms*,<sup>22</sup> stated that the free flow of information and ideas serves as a check on the abuse of authority by public servants and enables the discovery of flaws in the nation's judicial and political systems of government. The Supreme Court also held in the case of *S.P. Gupta v Union of India*<sup>23</sup> that the citizens "have right to know the facts, the true facts about the administration of the country and it is thus considered one of the pillars of a democratic State.

The right to Information Act of 2005 is a codification of this important fundamental right of freedom of speech and expression of the citizens. *Romesh Thappar v. State of Madras*<sup>24</sup> was One of the earliest cases where the Supreme Court laid emphasis on the people's right to know. There the petitioner had challenged an order issued by the then Government of Madras under Section 9(1-A) of the Madras Maintenance of Public Order Act, 1949 imposing a ban on the circulation of the petitioner's journal *Cross Roads* was struck down as violative of the right to freedom of speech and expression under Article 19(1)(a)<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Singh. (2014, December). Right to Information: The Basic Need of Democracy. *Journal of Education & Social Policy*, vol.1 (No.2). [https://www.jespnet.com/journals/Vol\\_1\\_No\\_2\\_December\\_2014/13.pdf](https://www.jespnet.com/journals/Vol_1_No_2_December_2014/13.pdf)

<sup>18</sup> *Chairman Railway Board vs. Mrs. Chandrima Das* Civil Appeal No. 639, of 2000.

<sup>19</sup> *The Constitution of India*, 1950

<sup>20</sup> *Hamdard Dawakhana v. Union of India*, AIR (1960) SC 554.

<sup>21</sup> *Bennett Coleman v. Union of India*, AIR (1973) SC 106.

<sup>22</sup> *K. v. Secretary of State for the Home Department Ex. P. Simms*, LR 2000(2) AC 115.

<sup>23</sup> *S.P. Gupta v Union of India*, AIR 1982 SC 149.

<sup>24</sup> *Romesh Thappar v. State of Madras*, AIR 1950 SC 124

<sup>25</sup> WORLD, I. L. (2018, July 28). CONSTITUTIONAL BASIS OF RIGHT TO INFORMATION ACT 2005 | Into Legal World. CONSTITUTIONAL BASIS OF RIGHT TO INFORMATION ACT 2005 | Into Legal World. <https://intolegalworld.com/article?title=constitutional-basis-of-right-to-information-act-2005>



Freedom to receive and disseminate information is considered to be one of the essential characteristics of the fundamental right of freedom of speech and expression under Article 19(1)(a) of the Constitution. A person cannot say to have made a well-informed decision without having an adequate amount of information. The right to information ensures access to information in the public interest for every citizen of the country.

### **Right to Information and Democracy**

The Citizen's right to know is considered to be one of the most important ingredients of participatory democracy. Good governance in a country is ensured through increased public participation and the contribution of the citizens in policy formulation. Access to information has proven to be an effective tool to ensure anti-corruption in the country. According to the World Bank, corruption can lower a nation's growth rate by 0.5 to 1.0 percentage points annually. Because they are most affected by economic hardship, depend on government services, and are least able to pay the additional costs associated with bribery, fraud, and the theft of economic advantages, the poor are particularly hard impacted by corruption's negative impacts.<sup>26</sup>

Right to information is also considered to be a deterrent as the knowledge that the information will be available and accessible to the public for scrutiny the public authorities tend to take a step back from acting corruptly. With access to information, the citizens get a voice to engage with the activities and actions of the public authorities. This access to information then makes the public authorities accountable and answerable to the public for all the loopholes which would otherwise not have been possible. Democracy in its true essence requires the public to be the self-governing force, to maintain the essence of democracy the public has to have the power to make an impact on the functioning of the government.

Access to information was not possible before 2005 which led to no participation of the public in the decision-making processes of the government. This lack of participation of the public led to corruption. The culture of secrecy enables the Unaccountability of public officials and transparency in how the government runs which then leads to abuse of power. In the case of *Dinesh Trivedi v. Union of India*<sup>27</sup>, The Supreme Court emphasized the value of having access

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<sup>26</sup>THE RIGHT TO INFORMATION: STRENGTHENING DEMOCRACY AND DEVELOPMENT. (n.d.). Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative.

<sup>27</sup> *Dinesh Trivedi v. Union of India*, AIR (1994) 4SCC 306,314.

to information. The Court stated: "Democracy expects openness and openness is concomitant of a free society, and the sunlight is the best disinfectant." The Supreme Court reiterated its support for transparent government in participatory democracy in this case as it considered the issues surrounding the release of the Vohra Committee Report.<sup>28</sup>

The court further observed that in modern constitutional democracies having the right to know is essential to be informed on the affairs of the government, which aims to create effective rules for governance and welfare for the people of the country. Supreme Court in *Reliance Petrochemical Ltd. V. Indian Express Newspapers, Bombay Pvt. Ltd.*<sup>29</sup> made an informative reflection "that one must remember that people have the right to know to take part in a participatory government. The right to information is an inherent right that shall be available to every citizen of the country to broaden the horizon of their fundamental right under Article 21.

Through the Right to information, Citizens will be in a position to examine the justification and effects of these policies and offer more effective alternatives that are better suited to their needs when they get Information that is current and accurate regarding how their government allocates resources and makes policy. Without such access, it is not possible to hold discussions that would help the public get involved in the policy formulation processes in the country. Planning for policies, including monitoring and evaluating programs by those who would be impacted, has passed into obscurity throughout this time. Every citizen of the nation has a right to know how their government operates.

The right to information ensures that public bodies are held accountable for their actions. In general, it is assumed that anything the government does is done for the benefit of everybody in the country and to attain the greatest possible return on the resources of the public that are being invested. The truth, though, is that there have been several instances of misappropriation, misuse, and irresponsible use of public investments in recent years. Complete transparency in all public dealings thus becomes necessary to monitor such situations.

The keystone of a healthy democratic arch is the existence of enlightened and well-informed

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<sup>28</sup> Singh. (2014, December). Right to Information: The Basic Need of Democracy. *Journal of Education & Social Policy*, vol.1(No.2). [https://www.jespnet.com/journals/Vol\\_1\\_No\\_2\\_December\\_2014/13.pdf](https://www.jespnet.com/journals/Vol_1_No_2_December_2014/13.pdf)

<sup>29</sup> *Reliance Petrochemical Ltd. V. Indian Express Newspapers, Bombay Pvt. Ltd.* AIR (1989) 190, (1988) SCR Supl.(3) 212

citizens. Information is power, as it empowers people by adding something new to their awareness and expanding the clarity of their ideas. Thus In a democracy, the right to knowledge is recognized throughout and stems from the idea of democracy.<sup>30</sup> The right to Information enables transparency in government actions, if there is no transparency in government actions people cannot have access to authentic information, and without it, the purpose of welfare cannot be realized. Access to information provides a platform for people to participate in governance with accurate knowledge.

In order to promote transparency, accountability, and openness, it is required that every citizen has the right to information under the control of public authorities. Every liberal democratic country is moving towards attaining this concept and our country is not an exception in the same. This right is essentially a derivative of the Article 19 of the Constitution. The basic ideology that it holds is that if the public does not have any information about how the government works we cannot form a well-versed opinion upon the same.

Freedom of the Press is the fundamental premise to ensure the circulation of information amongst the citizenry. Paramount importance is given to the freedom of the press to ensure that the people's right to know stays intact. Justice Mathews ruled in the case of *State of UP v. Raj Narain*<sup>31</sup> saying, There can be very few secrets in a government of responsibility like ours, where all representatives of the public must be accountable for their behavior. The citizens of our nation have a right to know about every public action and all that their public officials conduct in a public way. They have a right to be informed of every public transaction's specifics, in all relevant details. When confidentiality is demanded for transactions that may, at any rate, have no bearing on public security, one should be suspicious because their right to know, which is derived from the idea of freedom of speech but is not absolute.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Khanwalker. (2011, April). THE RIGHT TO INFORMATION ACT IN INDIA: ITS CONNOTATIONS AND IMPLEMENTATION. *The Indian Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 72(No. 2 (April-June, 2011)), 387–393. [https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/42761423.pdf?refreqid=fastly-default%3Aa814dbfb4c910f240c5788c94d19d505&ab\\_segments=0%2Fbasic\\_search\\_gsv2%2Fcontrol&origin=&initiator=search-results&acceptTC=1](https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/42761423.pdf?refreqid=fastly-default%3Aa814dbfb4c910f240c5788c94d19d505&ab_segments=0%2Fbasic_search_gsv2%2Fcontrol&origin=&initiator=search-results&acceptTC=1)

<sup>31</sup> *State of Uttar Pradesh v. Raj Narain*, (1975 AIR 865, 1975 SCR (3) 333)

<sup>32</sup> India, L. S. (n.d.). The Right To Information Act: A Real Step To Ensure Good Governance - Article 19. The Right to Information Act: A Real Step to Ensure Good Governance - Article 19. [https://www.legalserviceindia.com/articles/iftaa.htm#google\\_vignette](https://www.legalserviceindia.com/articles/iftaa.htm#google_vignette)

## Conclusion

Right to Information Act is a welfare legislation to enable every citizen of the country to obtain information from public bodies that thereby ensures transparency in the government and curbing corruption in the country and openness of government. Right to know is the lifeline of any democratic country and is also a stepping stone towards an open and participatory government. It facilitates debates on the matters of the government and policy formulation that gives the public a role to play in the governance of the country. The right to know is an inherent part of the constitutional framework of the country gaining its relevance under Article 19 (1) (a) of the Constitution. It is also a strong and powerful weapon in the hands of the public to ensure transparency and accountability of the government. The people's sovereignty serves as the main pillar for requiring transparency in government. Numerous examples demonstrate the effectiveness of this right to information as a strategy for enhancing openness and accountability in governance and lowering corruption.

Not only has the right to information's status as a fundamental right been recognized throughout the world and by human rights law, but it also plays a significant role in many other areas of life. In any democratic setup, the participation of the citizenry is very essential however this participation tends to become entirely meaningless if there exists no well-informed citizenry. A well-informed public and information openness are essential for a democracy's operation, as well as for containing corruption and holding governments and their agents responsible to the governed. RTI is an inherent right that must be established in order to guarantee citizens' access to information under the control of public authorities and to foster accountability and openness in how each public authority operates. No democracy can be effective if its citizens are unable to review the actions of the officials, government employees, and other public servants. People must be well-informed on government policies, activities, and failures in order to assess its performance and ensure the strengthening of participatory democracy.

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