

Study on Public Awareness of the to Information Act

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Abstract

In order to ensure greater and more effective access to information the government resolved that Freedom of information Act 2002 enacted by the parliament needs be made more progressive, participatory and meaningful. The important changes proposed to be incorporated include establishment of appellate machinery with investigating powers to review decisions of the public information officers. Penal provisions for failure to provide information as per law. In view of significant changes proposed in the existing Act 2002. The proposed legislation will provide an effective framework for effectuating the right of information recognized under article 19 of the constitution of India.

Keywords: Act, Government, Information, Legislation, Parliament, Right.

Introduction

Right to information Act has been and came into force on the 12th October 2005 enactment (on 15th June 2005) some provisions have come into force with immediate effective obligation of public information authorities section 4(1) designated public information officers and assistant public information officer under Section 24 to provide the required information the Act is not affected to intelligence and security organizations section 24&28 employees to make rules to carry out the provisions of the act.

This act may be called the Right to information Act 2005. It extends to the whole of India except the state of Jammu and Kashmir. The provisions of (1) and (2) of Section 5, Section 12, 13, 15, 16, 24, 27 and 28 shall come into force on the one hundred and twentieth day of its enactment.

"Appropriate Government" means in relation to a public authority which is established, constituted, owned, controlled or substantially financed by funds provided directly or indirectly. By the central Government or the union territory administration, the central Government. By the State Government. "Central Information commission" means the central Information commission constituted under sub-section (i) of section 12. "Central public Information officer" means the central public Information officer designated under sub-section (i) and includes Central Assistant Public Information Officer designated as such under sub-section (2) of section 5. "Chief information commission" and

"Information commission" mean the chief Information Commissioner and Information commissioner appointed under sub-section 930 of Section 12.

History of the Right to Information Act:

It has taken India 82 years to transition from an opaque system of governance, legitimized by the colonial Official Secrets Act to one where citizens can demand the right to information. The recent enactment of the Right to Information Act 2005 marks a significant shift for Indian democracy, for the greater the access of citizens to information, the greater will be the responsiveness of government to community needs.

Right to Information is derived from our fundamental right of freedom of speech and expression under Article 19 of the Constitution. If we do not have information on how our Government and Public Institutions function, we cannot express any informed opinion on it. Democracy revolves around the basic idea of Citizens being at the center of governance. And the freedom of the press is an essential element for a democracy to function. It is thus obvious that the main reason for a free press is to ensure that Citizens are informed. Thus it clearly flows from this, that the Citizens Right to Know is paramount.

Need for the Right to Information

In recent years, there has been an almost unstoppable global trend towards recognition of the right to information by countries, intergovernmental organizations, civil society and the people. The right to information has been recognized as a fundamental human right which upholds the inherent dignity of all human beings. The right to information forms the crucial .

Underpinning of participatory democracy it is essential to ensure accountability and good governance. The greater the access of the citizen to information, the greater the responsiveness of government to community needs. Alternatively the more restrictions that are placed on access the greater will be the feelings of "powerlessness" and "alienation" . Without information people cannot adequately exercise their rights as citizens or make informed choices.

Flow of information in India severely restricted by

1. The legislative framework includes several pieces of restrictive legislation such as the Official Secrets Act 1923
2. The pervasive culture of secrecy and arrogance within the bureaucracy.
3. The low levels of literacy and rights awareness amongst India's people.

The primary power of RTI is the fact that it empowers individual Citizens to requisition information. Hence without necessarily forming pressure groups or associations it puts power directly into the hands of the foundation of democracy.

Right to Information as a Fundamental Right

The right to information is a fundamental right flowing from Art 19(1) (a) of the Constitution is now a well-settled proposition. Over the years, the Supreme Court has consistently ruled in favor of the

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citizen's right to know. The nature of this right and the relevant restrictions thereto has been discussed by the Supreme Court in a number of cases.

Impact of the New Law

Now that the statute requires information about the pendency of the applications reasons as to why they are not disposed of or the reasons behind the rejection of an application there is bound to be improvement in the efficiency of the departments. As of now the only supervision of efficiency is supervision that is made by the superior officers at the time of reviewing the employees work and while recording comments in the annual confidential reports or ACRs.

Citizenry the Right to Information has shown promise of empowering Citizens to get accountability and act as an enforcer of good governance.

The overall impact of these decisions has been to establish clearly that the right to freedom of information the public's right to know is embedded in the provisions guaranteeing fundamental rights in the Constitution.

Criticisms

It provides for information on demand so to speak but does not sufficiently stress information on matters related to food, water, environment and other survival needs that must be given pro-actively by public authorities.

The Act does not emphasize active intervention in educating people about their right to access information vital in a country with high levels of illiteracy and poverty the promotion of a culture of openness within official structures. Without widespread education and awareness about the possibilities under the new Act, it could just remain on paper.

Another stringent criticism of the Act is the recent amendment that was to be made allowing for file noting except those related to social and development projects to be exempted from the purview of the Act.

Statement of the Problem:

Right To Information Act was enacted 2005 already 5 years have lapsed the problem is to what extent the public are aware about the implication and influences of the Act. The Act was enacted with the objective of providing information to the public and protect the interest. The purpose of the Act is to ensure the transparency in the working and administration of public offices. The public are not utilizing this welfare legislation due to lack of awareness, Hence this study is made to test the awareness of the rural public on the Right to information Act.

Scope of the Study

The research work has under taken in awareness of public on right to information Act. The scope of the study is limited only to the public. The facts given by the study will help in analyzing the implementation right to information Act. The data collected through questionnaire are processed through several statistical techniques to study the perception of Public.

Objectives of the Study

- ✓ To study theoretical framework relating to the right to information Act.
- ✓ To assess the perception of the public towards the right to information Act.
- ✓ To analysis the level of awareness of the public about the right to information acts.
- ✓ To examine the practical difficulties faced by the authorities in implementation of Act.
- ✓ To offer suggestions based on findings of the study.

Limitation of the Study

- The research work has conducted only Paramakudi Taluk.
- Although public has the awareness of the Act. But they do not ask the information. Because of the fear factor they do not collect the information.
- A government employee who works in a Right to Information Act they do not know everything about this Act.

Research Methodology

Methodology is an important role in a research study. There are different methods to be followed at various stages of any scientific investigation. Research is an art of scientific investigation. Research, in common parlance refers to a search for knowledge. One can also define research as a scientific and systematic search for pertinent information on a specific topic. It is an academic activity and as such the term should be used in a technical sense.

Research Design

The study is descriptive in nature descriptive researches are those which are concerned with describing the characteristics of a particular individual or a group. The descriptive research describes the demographic characteristics of the candidates. The research under taken by the research is descriptive research. A fact finding approach related to the present and abstracting generalization by the crosssectional study of the current situation.

Important Features of Research Design

- ✓ It provides the sources and types of information relevant to the research problem.
- ✓ It suggests which approach will be used for gathering and analyzing the data.

Sampling

As there are many public in the Organization, it is not possible to meet each and every public and conduct a survey because it is time consuming the tedious process. Hence among the sampling design. The samples were selected using random sampling.

Sample Size

A total of 75 respondents were selected as sample size for this study.

Sources of the Data

Primary data and Secondary data are used in this research. Primary data was collected by interviewing technique through a structured questionnaire from various general Public. The secondary data collected from the Internet books, articles, magazine, newspaper, etc.,

Statistical Tools used

The collected data was properly tabulated and analyzed. The relevant statistical tools used for present study.

- Percentage analysis
- Chi-square test
- Ranking method

Hypotheses

1. There is no significant difference between right to information received and right to information given.
2. There is no significant difference between first appeal and second appeal.
3. There is no significant difference between intelligence collections of information.

Analysis and Interpretation

Data Analysis & Interpretation Data analysis is defined as a process of cleaning, transforming, and modeling data to discover useful information for business decision-making. The purpose of Data Analysis is to extract useful information from data and taking the decision based upon the data analysis.

Percentage Analysis

Table No. 1 Gender of the Respondents

Particulars	No. of respondents	Percentage
Male	53	71
Female	22	29
Total	75	100

Interpretation:

From the above table, the samples selected from the gender of the respondents of male and female. From the above table ,it is found that 71 % of the whole respondents are male and rest of them are female. So the majority of the respondents are male.

Table No. 2 Respondents Educational Qualification

Particulars	No. of respondents	Percentage
12th	38	51
UG	30	40
PG	7	9
Total	75	100

Interpretation

Table reveals that the total respondent. From the above table it is found the 51% of the respondents are finished higher secondary qualification, 40% of the respondents collage level and 9% of them belongs to post graduates category. The majority of the respondent’s qualification are higher secondary only.

Table No.3 The Purpose of the Right to Information Act

Particulars	No. of respondents	Percentage
Frank stage	27	36
Increase the awareness	16	21
Both	32	43
Total	75	100

Interpretation:

The overall analysis reveals that the above table it is inferred that 43% of the respondents follows Frank stage and increase the awareness, 36% of the respondents follow frank stage and 21% of the respondents follow increase the awareness and 43% of the respondents involved for both of them. The majority of the respondents is both such as frank stage and increases the awareness.

Table No.4 Beneficiaries of this Act

Particulars	No. of respondents	Percentage
Government employeesonly	29	39
All Indian citizens	28	37
Collectors only	18	24
Total	75	100

Interpretation

On the basis of above beneficiaries sample respondents were selected among this categories to pursue the research work successfully for present study. From the table it is inferred that 39% of the respondents are government employees only, 37% of the respondents are all Indian citizens and 24% of the respondents are collectors only. The majority of the respondents are government employees only.

Table No.5 Respondents Knowing the Information related to Sign of Life:

Particulars	No. of respondents	Percentage
24 hours	24	32
12 hours	26	35
48 hours	25	33
Total	75	100

Interpretation:

The above table states that the response in providing suggestion by the 35% the respondents 12 hours for getting the information, 33% of the respondents are interested to get 48 hours and 32% of the respondents are interested to get 24 hours. The majority of the respondents are interested to get information related to sign of life within 12 hours.

Table No.6 Language is used for getting Information from the People

Particulars	No. of respondents	Percentage
Regional language	29	39
English or Hindi	11	14
Both	35	47
Total	75	100

Interpretation:

The table given above reveals that the respondent's views regarding the list of imports language is used for getting information. From the table it is found that 47% the respondents are select of both, 39% of the respondents are select regional language and 14% of the respondents are known English or Hindi. The majority of the respondents of the both of the language are used for getting information.

Chi-Square

Awareness and Sex

The association between Awareness and sex is analyzed and the results were given in the following table.

Ho: There is no association between awareness and sex

Table No.7

Particulars	Male	Female	Total
Awareness	18	14	22
Not aware	28	15	43
Total	46	29	75

Calculated value =2.66

Table value =3.841 Degrees of freedom =1

Interpretation:

Since the Null Hypothesis accepted because the calculated value is less than the table value ie $3.443 < 5.991$. Hence there is no association between awareness and sex.

Awareness and Age

The association between Awareness and age is analyzed and the results were given in the following table.

Ho: There is no association between awareness and age

Table No.8

Particulars	20-30	30-40	Above 40	Total
Awareness	14	14	5	33
Not awareness	17	12	13	42
Total	31	26	18	75

Calculated value =3.443

Table value =5.991 Degrees of freedom =2

Interpretation:

Since the Null Hypothesis accepted because the calculated value is less than the table value ie $3.443 < 5.991$. Hence there is no association between awareness and age.

Awareness and Qualification

The association between Awareness and Qualification is analyzed and the results were given in the following table.

Ho: There is no association between awareness and Qualification

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Table No.9

Particulars	12th	UG	PG	Total
Awareness	16	14	3	33
Not awareness	20	17	4	42
Total	36	32	7	75

Calculated value =0.24

Table value =5.991

Degrees of freedom =2

Interpretation:

Since the Null Hypothesis accepted because the calculated value is less than the table value ie $0.24 < 5.991$. Hence there is no association between awareness and Qualification.

Rank Analysis

Table: 10 Information does not collect under this Act:

Factors	Rank I	Rank II	Rank III	Total	Weight		Rank
					score	Average	
Nationalsecurity	22	24	29	75	143	1.90	II
Common information	32	25	18	75	164	2.18	I
Information Relates to thirdperson	14	25	36	75	128	1.71	III

Interpretation:

The above table sours that common Information in the First rank followed by National Security in Second rank and lest rank for Information Relates to third persons.

Table No.11Government Department does not Disclosed the Information

Factors	Rank I	Rank II	Rank III	Rank IV	Rank V	Total	Weight score	Weight average	Rank
Intelligence Bureau	15	17	10	19	14	75	225	3	III

Narcotic Control Bureau	20	16	7	26	6	75	243	3.24	II
Border Security Force	19	20	15	12	9	75	253	3.37	I
National Industrial Security force	13	21	6	17	18	75	219	2.92	IV
Nager Haveli	11	14	15	12	23	75	203	2.70	V

Interpretation:

The study reveals that the First rank for factors Border security Force, Second rank for Narcotic control Bureau, Third rank for Intelligence Bureau, Firth rank for national Industrial Security Force and last rank for Nager Haveli.

Findings, Suggestions and Conclusion

Findings of the Study

- It has been identified that 71% of respondents are male persons.
- It has been found that majority of the respondents educational Qualification is higher study.
- It has been found that majority of the respondents are both such as frank stage and increase the awareness.
- It has been found that majority of the respondents are government employee.
- It has been identified from the study majority of the respondents are interested to get information related to sign of life and independence within 12 hours.
- It has been identified from the study majority of the respondents are wanted to get document of the information.
- It has been identified from the study majority of the respondents collect the information for National security.
- It has been found that majority of the respondents are collecting the 20 years data.
- It has been found that majority of the respondents are come under intelligence bureau.
- It has been found that majority of the respondents are state information officers.
- It has been found that majority of the respondents are come under If the information is wrong.
- It has been identified from the study majority of the respondents are both of the language is used for getting information.
- It has been identified from the study majority of the respondents are does not aware of this act.

Suggestions

The main problem is to be analyzed as unawareness of this Act. So it is important to take further steps to aware of the Act.

- ✓ To conduct the awareness programme for the rural people and uneducated people to know the right of information Act.
- ✓ To get aware about the rights, give the suitable advertisement through television and magazine, newspaper, radio, social media, etc
- ✓ Government of Tamilnadu takes necessary steps to attach in the school text books for aware of the right of information Act.
- ✓ To aware of the right the rural people, education institution take steps through NSS, NNS, Village promotional Programme etc.
- ✓ Due to the lack of current awareness of Right to information Act. Significant education and right to information testing be introduced. Organized edification of right to information Act workers and the media. Who constitute two most preferred sources of information will be crucial.
- ✓ With continued progress in the field of vaccine development right to information Act therapeutic vaccines may provide a potentially promising approach for the control of lethal right to information act associated malignancies.
- ✓ Overall the knowledge of the general public about right to information Act infection is poor. Efforts should be increased to give sufficient and unbiased information on right to information Act infection to the general public.
- ✓ In this suggestion a need for awareness rising among right to information Act to improve the practical implementation of the right to information act rights law in Lithuania.
- ✓ All the standards, law and codes analyzed deal with guaranteeing access to information.
- ✓ All the above research reveals optimistic way about the future of right to information act.
- ✓ The suggestion that the notion of public interest employed in the Act should be interpreted conservatively when it is being balanced against the protection of information shared with an expectation of confidentiality within a fiduciary relationship.
- ✓ The arrangement was done that any person seeking some information can approach to be touch screen and get the information in nutshell. Such experiments are railway station airports and installing touch screen for such purposes is a first attempt in the state and the experiment is successful and it can be replicated anywhere in the state.

Conclusion

Though the Right to Information Act was enacted in 2005 and really five years have lapsed. If the most of the people in general are not aware of the existence of the act. Even among the educated

group working in government offices, public are aware of the expedience of the act. But most of them are not aware fully about the contents and implication of the Act under various section of the Act.

There are a hand full of countries where the right to information is enshrined in law but at same time the law restricts the right in its very essence. One such country is the public where an otherwise excellent law requires stating the reasons for their requests. Privacy and confidentiality are important values. Linked to the protection of autonomy and individuality which are themselves highly prized in a democratic society like India. The right to information act promotes other values critical in a democracy transparency and accountability to government action. None of these value is absolute.

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