

RIGHT TO INFORMATION ACT AND GOOD GOVERNANCE

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“RTI: IS THE POWERFUL TOOL IN THE COMMON MAN’S HAND”

ABSTRACT

Good Governance is necessary for democracy. Such governance includes some factors such as transparency, accountability, rule of law and people's participation. India is a democratic country and in every democratic country, there is a need of good governance and transparency. Today in India there is unprecedented corruption at all levels. All feel its pinch but corruption is roaring high. The main factor behind the corruption is secrecy, which has taken as a tool of faithfulness towards government in past era. If we want transparency in governance, there is a need to crack the corruption by cracking the walls of secrecy. Gone are the days when public dealings were kept in strict secret, a practice which often led to corruption, misuse and abuse of statutory and administrative power. Freedom of information brings openness in the administration which helps to promote transparency in state affairs, keep government more accountable and ultimately reduce corruption. For a reasonable government, where all the agents of the public must be responsible for their conduct, there should be no secrets.

Therefore, to remove the corruption, many countries have enacted the Right to Information Act. In that direction government of India too includes a new era of good governance through the enactment of Right to Information Act in 2005. The right to Information Bill, 2005 was passed by the Lok Sabha on May 11, 2005 and by the

Rajya Sabha on May 12, 2005 and received the assent of the President of India on June 15, 2005 and came to force on October 12, 2005. It provides an opportunity to interact with the officials and institutions. Right to Information is a powerful weapon to fight against corruption, unlimited power and misuse of power. It provides a strong support to democracy and promotes good governance, by empowering the citizen's ability to participate effectively and hold government officials accountable. The main thrust of RTI law is to change the culture of secrecy, red tapism and isolation that has long plagued India's inflexible and dark bureaucracy.

Present paper is an effort to discuss the major indicators of good governance, role of RTI in good governance and elimination of corruption in India through RTI.

KEYWORDS:-

- ❖ RTI
- ❖ Good Governance
- ❖ Transparency
- ❖ Accountability
- ❖ Public Information Offices

INTRODUCTION:-

“Democracy is the form of government established by the people, of the people and for the people”. This phrase suits on the text only until and unless there is access of right to information of the activities of their representatives. This right includes right of holding public opinion and to seek, receive information from the public authorities. There is very close link between right to information and good governance. Right to Information is the tool of achieving the goals of good governance. The essences of good governance are transparency, accountability, responsiveness and consequently, these are promoted or facilitated by the Right to Information. Welfare of the people is considered as the goal of representative form of government and the source of the government’s income is generated from the taxes paid by these people, consequently they have justifiable right to know whether their income is properly utilised or not. The extent of this right does not limited to mere getting information but to but also to take legal action in form of PIL etc. and get the justice through the courts of law.

RTI has the very active and vital role in the good governance in India; where, corruption and criminalization is the nerve of administration and the source of this corruption is the secrecy which they have maintained for the long time, therefore introduction of the RTI Act is the measure step towards reducing the corruption to certain extent.(1) We live in an age of information, in which the free flow of information and ideas determines the pace of development and well being of the people. The implementation of RTI Act is, therefore, an important milestone in our quest for building an enlightened and at the same time, a prosperous society.

Therefore, the exercise of the Right to Information cannot be the privilege of only a few.”People who have access to information and who understand how to make use of the acquired information in the processes of exercising their political, economic and legal rights become empowered, which, in turn, enable them to build their strengths and assets, so as to improve the quality of life. And ultimately this is only the aim of good governance. Focusing on the importance of RTI Prime Minister “Digital India, which was the part of good governance campaign of the government was complementary to RTI because putting information online brings transparency which in turn brings trust.”Further he says “RTI has become a tool of good governance. The RTI Act should not just be limited to a citizen’s right but it should empower everyone to hold truth to power”(2)

Background of Right To Information in India

Some Landmarks in the RTI Journey

- ❖ 1975:Supreme Court of India rules that the people of India have a right to know.
- ❖
- ❖ 1982: Supreme Court rules that the right to information is a fundamental right.
- ❖ 1985: Intervention application in the Supreme Court by environmental NGOs following the Bhopal gas tragedy, asking for access to information relating to environmental hazards.
- ❖ 1989: Election promise by the new coalition government to bring in a transparency law.

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- ❖ 1990: Government falls before the transparency law can be introduced.
- ❖ 1990: Formation of the Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sangathan (MKSS) in Rajasthan and the launching of a movement demanding village level information.
- ❖ 1996: Formation of the National Campaign for People's Right to Information (NCPRI).
- ❖ 1996: Draft RTI bill prepared and sent to the government by NCPRI and other groups and movements, with the support of the Press Council of India.
- ❖ 1997: Government refers the draft bill to a committee set up under the Chairmanship of HD Shourie.
- ❖ 1997: The Shourie Committee submits its report to the government.
- ❖ 1999: A cabinet minister allows access to information in his ministry. Order reversed by PM.
- ❖ 2000: Case filed in the Supreme Court demanding the institutionalization of the RTI.
- ❖ 2000: Shourie Committee report referred to a Parliamentary Committee.
- ❖ 2001: Parliamentary Committee gives its recommendations.
- ❖ 2002: Supreme Court gives ultimatum to the government regarding the right to information.
- ❖ 2002: Freedom of Information Act passed in both houses of Parliament.
- ❖ 2003: Gets Presidential assent, but is never notified.
- ❖ 2004: National elections announced, and the –strengthening of the RTI Act included in the manifesto of the Congress Party.
- ❖ May 2004: The Congress Party comes to power as a part of a UPA coalition government, and the UPA formulates a –minimum common programme which again stresses the RTI.
- ❖ June 2004: Government sets up a National Advisory Council (NAC) under Mrs. Sonia Gandhi.
- ❖ August 2004: NCPRI sends a draft bill to the NAC, formulated in consultation with many groups and movements. NAC discusses and forwards a slightly modified version, with its Recommendations to the government.
- ❖ December 2004: RTI Bill introduced in Parliament and immediately referred to a Parliamentary Committee. However, Bill only applicable to the central government.
- ❖ Jan-April 2005: Bill considered by the Parliamentary Committee and the Group of Ministers and a revised Bill, covering the central governments and the state introduced in Parliament.
- ❖ May 2005: The RTI Bill passed by both houses of Parliament.
 - ❖ June 2005: RTI Bill gets the assent of the President of India
 - ❖ October 2005: The RTI Act comes into force.

Right To Information and the connection between Indian Constitution

In India, no separate provision has been made for right to information in any constitutional document. However, it is included in the right to expression and freedom to speech. The matters of the Indian constitutions provided the right to expression under article 19(1), but nothing explicitly has mentioned about right to information. It is the Indian judiciary which took the pain to make this right under Article 19(1)(9) of the constitution.

It is pertinent to note that the Supreme Court has given a wide connotation to art. 19(1)(a) by emphasizing the proposition that freedom of speech involves not only communication but also receipt of information.

Objective Of Right To Information Act 2005

The basic objective of the Right to Information Act is to empower the citizens, promote transparency and accountability in the working of the Government, Contain corruption, and make our democracy work for the people in real sense. It goes without saying that an informed citizen is better equipped to keep necessary vigil on the instruments of governance and make the government more accountable to the governed. The Act is a big step towards making the citizens informed about the activities of the Government .(3)

Right To Information is bound by the Preamble

An Act to provide for setting out the practical regime of right to information for citizens to secure access to information under the control of public authorities, in order to promote transparency and accountability in the working of every public authority, the constitution of a Central Information Commission and State Information Commissions and for matters connected therewith or incidental there to:

WHEREAS the Constitution of India has established democratic Republic;

- AND WHEREAS democracy requires an informed citizenship and transparency of information which are vital to its functioning and also to contain corruption and to hold Governments and their agencies accountable to the governed.
- ANsD WHEREAS revelation of information in actual practice is likely to conflict with other Public interests including efficient operations of the Governments, optimum use of limited fiscal resources and the preservation of confidentiality of sensitive information.
- AND WHEREAS it is necessary to harmonies these conflicting interests while preserving the supremacy of the democratic ideal.
- NOW, THEREFORE, it is expedient to provide for furnishing certain information to citizens Who desire to have it.(4)

A Brief about Right To Information

What is Information?

Information is any material in any form. It includes records, documents, memos, e-mails, opinions, advices, press releases, circulars, orders, logbooks, contracts, reports, papers,samples, models, data material held in any electronic form. It also includes information relating to any private body which can be obtained by the public authority under any law for the time being in force.

What is 'Right to Information'?

“Right to information” means the right to information accessible under this Act which is held by or under the control of any public authority and includes the right to—

- (i) inspection of work, documents, records;
- (ii) taking notes, extracts, or certified copies of documents or records;

- (iii) Taking certified samples of material;
- (iv) Obtaining information in the form of diskette, floppies, tapes, video cassettes or in any other electronic mode or through printouts where such information is stored in a computer or in any other device.

What is a Public Authority?

Before we file any RTI against anybody we should always remember that, that body should be a government body or a public body. A "public authority" is any authority or body or Institution of selfgovernment established or constituted by or under the Constitution; or by any other law made by the Parliament or a State Legislature; or by notification issued or order made by the Central government or a state government.

The bodies owned, controlled or substantially financed by the Central Government or a State Government and non-Government organizations substantially financed by the Central Government or a State Government also falls within the definition of public authority. The financing of the body or the NGO by the Government may be direct or indirect

Public Information Officer

Public authorities have designated some of its officers as Public Information Officer. They are responsible to give information to a person who seeks information under the RTI Act.

Assistant Public Information Officer

These are the officers at sub-divisional level to whom a person can give his RTI application or appeal. These officers send the application or appeal to the Public Information Officer of the public authority or the concerned appellate authority. An Assistant Public Information Officer is not responsible to supply the information.

The Assistant Public Information Officers appointed by the Department of Posts in various post offices are working as Assistant Public Information Officers for all the public authorities under the Government of India.

What is the application procedure for requesting information?

Apply in writing or through electronic means in English or Hindi or in the official

- Language of the area, to the PIO, specifying the particulars of the information sought for.
- Reason for seeking information are not required to be given.
- Pay fees as may be prescribed (if not belonging to the below poverty line category)

What is the time limit to get Information:

- 30 days from the date of application.
- 48 hours for information concerning the life and liberty of a person (Section 7)
- 5 days shall be added to the above response time, in case the application for the information is given to Assistant Public Information Officer.
- If the interests of a third party are involved then time limit will be 40 days.
- Failure to provide information within the specific period is a deemed refusal.

What is the fee?

As already pointed out, a citizen has a right to inspect the records of a public authority. For inspection of records, the public authority shall charge no fee for the first hour. But a fee of rupees five (Rs.5/-) for each subsequent hour (or fraction thereof) shall be charged. If the applicant belongs to below poverty line (BPL) category, he is not required to pay any fee. However, he should submit a proof in support of his claim to belong to the below poverty line. The application not accompanied by the prescribed fee of RS.50/-.

Format of Application

There is no prescribed format of application for seeking information. The application can be made on plain paper. The application should, however, have the name and complete postal address of the applicant even in cases where the information is sought electronically; the application should contain name and postal address of the applicant. The information seeker is not required to give reasons for seeking information.

Exemption from disclosure of Information

According to the Section 8 and 9 of the there are some information which the Public Authority are bond to disclose .

Such as :

- Information, disclosure of which would prejudicially affect the sovereignty and integrity of India.
- The security, strategic, scientific or economic interests of the State, relation with foreign State or lead to incitement of an offence.
- Information which has been expressly forbidden to be published by any court of law or Tribunal or the disclosure of which may constitute contempt of court.
- Information, the disclosure of which would cause a breach of privilege of Parliament or the State Legislature.
- Information including commercial confidence, trade secrets or intellectual property, the disclosure of which would harm the competitive position of a third party, unless the competent authority is satisfied that larger public interest warrants the disclosure of such information.
- Information received in confidence from foreign Government.
- Cabinet papers including records of deliberations of the Council of Ministers, Secretaries and other officers.

- Information, the disclosure of which would endanger the life or physical safety of any person or identify the source of information or assistance given in confidence for law enforcement or security purposes.(5)

RIGHT TO INFORMATION AND OBLIGATIONS OF PUBLIC AUTHORITIES

Every public authority shall—

(a) Maintain all its records duly catalogued and indexed in a manner and the forms which facilitates the right to information under this Act and ensure that all records that are appropriate to be computerised are, within a reasonable time;

(b) Publish within one hundred and twenty days from the enactment of this Act,—

- i) The particulars of its organization, functions and duties;
- ii) The powers and duties of its officers and employees;
- iii) The procedure followed in the decision making process, including channels of supervision and accountability;
- iv) The norms set by it for the discharge of its functions;
- v) The rules, regulations, instructions, manuals and records, held by it or under its control or used by its employees for discharging its functions;
- vi) A statement of the categories of documents that are held by it or under its control;
- vii) The particulars of any arrangement that exists for consultation with, or representation by, the members of the public in relation to the formulation of its policy or implementation thereof;
- viii) A directory of its officers and employees
- ix) The budget allocated to each of its agency, indicating the particulars of all plans, proposed expenditures and reports on disbursements made;
- x) Details in respect of the information, available to or held by it, reduced in an electronic form;
- xi) The particulars of facilities available to citizens for obtaining information, including the working hours of a library or reading room, if maintained for public use;
- xii) The names, designations and other particulars of the Public Information Officers;
- xiii) Such other information as may be prescribed; and thereafter update these publications every year;

(c) Publish all relevant facts while formulating important policies or announcing the decisions which affect public;

(d) Provide reasons for its administrative or quasi-judicial decisions to affected persons.

(e) All materials shall be disseminated taking into consideration the cost effectiveness, local language and the most effective method of communication in that local area and the information should be easily accessible; to the extent possible in electronic format with the Central Public Information Officer or State Public Information Officer. As the case may be, available free or at such cost of the medium or the print cost price as may be prescribed.(6)

Disadvantages of RTI

As we know that there are two sides of the coin head and tale and we can also say that if there is some act passed or some amendment passed then there will be both negative and positive sides of it .

Some of the negative sides are :

RIGHT TO PRIVACY CONFLICT WITH RIGHT TO INFORMATION

The right to privacy and the right to information are both essential human rights in theλ Modern information society. For the most part, these two rights complement each other in holding governments accountable to individuals. But there is a potential conflict between these rights when there is a demand for access to personal information held by government bodies. Where the two rights overlap, states need to develop mechanisms for identifying core issues to limit conflicts and for balancing the rights.

- Laws provide a fundamental right for any person to access information held by government bodies. At the same time, right to privacy laws grant individuals a fundamental right to control the collection of, access to, and use of personal information about them that is held by governments and private bodies. However, the reality is more complex.
- Privacy and RTI are often described as “two sides of the same coin”—mainly acting as complementary rights that promote individuals rights to protect themselves and to promote government accountability. Privacy is increasingly being challenged by new technologies and practices. The technologies make possible growing collection and sharing of personal information. Sensitive personal data (including biometrics and DNA makeup) are now collected and used routinely. Public records are being disclosed over the Internet. In response to this set of circumstances, more than 60 countries have adopted comprehensive laws that give individuals some control over the collection and use of these data by public and private bodies.
- At the same time we also know that Right To Information is also spreading whole over India actually not only India but whole over world . Right To Information is also nowadays a compulsory right for everyone.

- The main conflict between RTI and Right To Privacy is that nowadays people used to file RTI to seeks someone personal information also but for that there is Section 11 of the RTI Act which deals with 3rd Party Information .
- If a people have a fight or quarrel with someone then also he or she used to file a RTI against him or her to take some information.

Thus we can say that though there is a conflict between between both of the rights but there are some provisions and rules also to protect the rights of the other person .(7)

Good Governance

- ‘Governance’ is the process of decision-making and the process by which decisions are implemented (or not implemented).
- Governance can be used in several contexts such as corporate governance, international governance, national governance and local governance.
- In the 1992 report entitled “Governance and Development”, the World Bank set out its definition of Good Governance. It defined Good Governance as “the manner in which power is exercised in the management of a country’s economic and social resources for development”.
- Good governance has 8 major characteristics.’ It is participatory, consensus-oriented, accountable, transparent, responsive, effective and efficient, equitable and inclusive and follows the rule of law.
- It assures that corruption is minimized, the views of minorities are taken into account and that the voices of the most vulnerable in society are heard in decision-making.
- It is also responsive to the present and future needs of society.(8)

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN RTI AND GOOD GOVERNANCE

“Open Government is the new democratic culture of an open society towards which every liberal democracy is moving and our country should be no exception. In a country like India which is committed to socialistic pattern of society, right to know becomes a necessity for the poor, ignorant and illiterate masses.”(9)

Whenever we talk about good governance, basic and first things that strike in our minds are transparency, accountability, participation of the people, informed citizenry etc, and these elements are core value of any good governance.(10) The objectives and purpose of the very RTI Act is to achieve these objectives, so in this way it acts as a tool of good governance.

1) Participation :

Good governance requires that civil society has the opportunity to participate during the formulation of development strategies and people should be able to participate in the design and implementation of programmes and projects.

And this can be possible only RTI. Without people's participation, the RTI will remain a non-starter.

Right to Information act creates a connection between people and government. RTI act encouraged the participation of common people on the process of governance. Earlier people had the will, but did not have the way to take part in so-called official affairs, but RTI act smooth the way for active participation of the common people in governance.(11)

2) Accessibility

Right to Information makes it possible to easy access of information from government departments, documents, records, services, finances and policies to all sectors of community. The Right to Information act by providing easy access of information reduces the traditional long gap between citizens and administration and thus helps in nation building process. The right to know and easy access of government information helps the people to understand the limitations of government at different levels. The availability of information also helps to foster in development process and it is a symptom of true and mature democracy.(12)

(3) Transparency:

Transparency means information is freely available. In the context of governance, transparency refers to availability of information to the general public and clarity about functioning of government institutions. Transparency is the corner stone of any good government. Public has right to known about to policies and programmes of the government. All communication of the government must be opened to the public. The Right to information Act is intended to promote accountability and transparency in government decision making more open.

(4) Accountability:

Accountability is a key requirement of good governance. Without accountability, the root of any development failure cannot be traced. Hence not only governmental institutions but all private and civil society organizations must be accountable to the public and to their institutional stakeholders.

Right to information Act brings accountability in the administration. Accountability involves the survival of a mechanism, which ensures that both political and officials are answerable for their actions, performances and use of public resources. If they fail to maintain accountability, Their power and authority are finished. (13)

(5) Empowerment

Before enactment of Right to Information Act, participation in political and economic processes and the ability to make informed choices has been restricted to India. As a consequence, common people remain ignorant of various schemes and are unable to resist when their rights become causality. At the same time, people remain ignorant in terms of the ways and means through they can obtain their entitled rights from the concerned departments legally. Now with enactment of Right to Information act people can participate in decision making process and it enables the citizens to know about the government decisions. The Right to Information act empowering people by removing unnecessary secrecy surrounding in decision making process of the government.

(6) Equity and inclusiveness

Equity is another prominent feature of good governance. It implies everybody is a part of the governance and they do not feel excluded from the mainstream of society. The Right to Information act also does not make any discrimination between rich and poor and it covers all the citizens in India. It always comes forward to fight against inequality, injustice and inhuman activity.

7) Effectiveness and Efficiency:

The Seventh feature of good governance is efficiency and effectiveness. The concept of efficiency in good governance covers doing work at first speed and effectiveness means doing things effectively with result oriented. In this connection Right to Information act will bring more effective and efficient record management techniques that are needed to facilitate the provision of information in response to public interest. Under RTI provision 4 (1) it is clearly mentions, –It is the compulsory for public authority to maintain all its records duly catalogued and indexed. Under section 4(b) –every public authority is requested to publish within 120 days from the enactment of the act as many as 17 manuals. |

8) Rule of Law:

Good governance requires fair legal framework that are enforced impartially. A fair legal framework is necessary so that people may assess economic opportunities and act without fear. This requires that the rules be known be advance, that they be actually in force and judicial system should be independent.(14)

Role of RTI in Reducing Corruption in India

Corruption in India has become the most perplexing issue. It covers not only lower level but also upper level where ministers and bureaucrats are involved. Many cases of corruption where ministers are involved have been referred to the CBI for inquiry and action. Secrecy and lack of information create breeding ground for corruption and abuses of power. By promoting transparency and accountability Right to information curbs such abuses. Corruption is a process, which continues poverty and harms the poor. It creates an environment of distrust between the people and government, which affected upon the development and democratic governance. Under the RTI regime, there is unprecedented transparency in the working of public departments. As a result, there is better understanding of the decision making process and greater accountability of government. This has lead to reduction in corruption in country.(15)

The Prime Minister of India has felt that there is corruption both at political and administrative level. In 2007 when Indian Prime Minister Dr. Man Mohan Singh addressing the IAS probationers of 2006 stated that “the barriers of administrative and political corruption should be tackled by the upcoming bureaucrats and quality of governance be improved at all levels to build an India ‘worthy of our dreams’. If there are barriers, in our country, in our good governance, in our governance processes. It is a fact that there is lot of corruption, both at the political level and at the administrative level. We must take it head on.”

Hoshiar Singh and Mandir Singh, the higher authority to control the corruption from, Dr. Man Mohan Singh government has rightly remarked that “No drive against corruption can succeed unless or until the government itself is firmly committed to the task of weeding out dishonest and corrupt officials, irrespective of ranks and status. The punishment for corruption should be exemplary; the least should be dismissal from service. So RTI is vital tool, and a potent weapon in the hands of a common people to fight against corruption. The RTI makes the government very smooth, transparent, accountable, participative to the very common people. At the end we say RTI makes a path to the people by whom he connects to the government and changes governance to the good governance.”(16)

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION IN THE PROMOTION OF GOOD GOVERNANCE

Over 50 countries now have freedom of information laws and another 15-20 are actively considering adopting one. These nations are joined by a growing number of inter-Governmental bodies – including the World Bank, European Union and UNDP – that have established FOI policies. It provides that all citizens enjoy rights of freedom of opinion and expression, including the right to “seek, receive, and impart information and ideas, a guarantee now generally considered to include an obligation of openness on the part of Government.”(17)

PERFORMANCE OF THE RIGHT TO INFORMATION ACT, 2005

PM said this legislation was not a substitute for good governance, but was intended “to support and aid the process of good governance”. The passage of RTI Act has up to a certain extent infused transparency and accountability in the working of public departments. This has increased the efficiency of decision making process. This has led to reduction in corruption in the country as evident from the following:

- i) The Transparency International (TI) has reported that perceived corruption in India (a score of 3.5 out of 10) has declined at the rate of about 15-20 per cent per year, due mainly to the implementation of the RTI Act.
- ii) The Centre for Media Studies in collaboration with TI has recently accomplished an all India survey study (un-published) of the poor below the poverty line. The views of the poor have been elicited in respect of all the flagship programmes that have been implemented for alleviation of poverty. At least 40 per cent of the respondents have reported that corruption has declined.
- iii) It has also been observed that wherever NGOs are actively involved in the development activities, the perceived corruption is abysmally low. The progress of RTI Act has been studied by PRIA (Society for Participatory Research in Asia) in August 2006.”(18)

CHALLENGES IN RTI WAY OF GOOD GOVERNANCE

Since came into force on 15th June, 2005 Right to Information act has been successfully working in most of the Indian states. The act is enacted by the state government of Tamilnadu (1997), Rajasthan (2000), Delhi (2001), Maharashtra (2002), Karnataka (2002), Assam (2002), Madhya Pradesh (2003), and Jammu & Kashmir (2004). Research studies shows that in their operation area the Right to Information act has been facing many challenges. These are-

Low level of awareness among people is the major challenge before successful implementation of Right to Information act. People, particularly in remote areas are not concerned with the Right to Information act. The research studies observe that the major sources of awareness are –

- (1) Mass media like- television channels, newspapers, magazines, journals etc.
- (2) The state government has not taken any potential step to promote Right to Information act.
 - (b) Illiteracy and poverty is another major challenge before successful implementation of Right to Information act. Right to Information act has does not have any meaning for a Person who does not have enough money to live, who is not educated and who does not have freedom. In fact, their first requirement is the right to live (right to eat, right to work and right to shelter) and then Right to Information.
 - (c) Most of the uneducated even educated peoples do not have the proper knowledge about public Information officers, the procedure of paying fees and to get information.
 - (d) Lack of commitment inefficient record management both state and central government instructions posing challenge before successful implementation of RTI act.
 - (e) Due to the lack of efficient record management system, the public Information Officers face difficulty to get accurate and easy access of information from the concerned department, so that it can be provided to information seekers.
 - (f) The non-cooperation from the part of bureaucracy is another major hurdle before RTI act implementation in India. The Babu type mentality (colonial mindset) makes them to use information as their own prerogative. Sometimes for their vested interest or to show their superiority, the bureaucrats do not want to disclose the basic information to citizens.
 - (g) Bureaucracy also hides information for fear of criticism and to give a good image of them before public.
 - (h) Lack of effective coordination and cooperation among state information commissioners and the noncooperation of departments with PIO hinder the process of smooth implementation of RTI act.
 - (i) Lack of monitoring and review mechanism also hampers in successful implementation of RTI act in India.
 - (j) The limited use of technology has hindered effective implementation of RTI act. Except in a few states no effective IT system have been establish to monitor and report on the disposal of application by public authorities.

(k) The implementation of RTI act is uneven. It is not equally implemented to all the states. Therefore, awareness level also differs from state to state. In states like Arunachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Punjab the awareness level about RTI act is high, on the other hand awareness of people in Gujrat , Madhyapradesh, Jharkhand and UP is not high. Moreover different rules for different states especially on fees and costs make the RTI filing ineffective.

(l) Generally, it is observed that retired bureaucrats are being appointed for the post of highest level of RTI officials i.e. the information commission at the central and state levels. These commissions are the independent of the government.

(m) Non-availability of basic infrastructure is another serious hurdle before RTI implementation. The smooth implementation of RTI act requires the Public Information Officers (PIO) to provide information to the applicant through photocopies, soft copies etc. Though these facilities are easily accessible at districts level, but it is a challenge to get information form the block/Panchayat level. PIO claims that lack of infrastructure blockade RTI implementation at block level. (19)

Recommendations/Suggestions for effective implementation of RTI act-

(a) As stated above due to ignorance, most of people have not heard about RTI act. To tackle this issue government should allocate huge fund for publicity budget of RTI act. However, this fund should be spent through central Information commission.

(b) Publicity is very essential for RTI implementation. NGO's and civil society groups can take initiative to make massive awareness campaign to educate citizen about RTI act. This awareness programme may be at national, state and block level. Before making awareness programmes, the NGO's and CSC groups must identify the target i.e. vulnerable categories of citizens specifically- women, farmers and families, middle and working class. In this regard media and newspaper can play an effective role.

(c) Children are considered resources for the future health of a nation. Therefore, RTI act should be added in the school syllabus to arouse curiosity of children about RTI at the grass-root level.

(d) As the nodal administrative authority at the district level, every deputy commissioner and district collectors must be given responsibility of monitoring and implementation of RTI act by various departmental authorities within the respective district.

(e) State Administrative Training institute can organize appropriate training intervention for the stakeholders.

(f) There should be efficient and scientific record keeping agency so that applicants can get accurate information. Without modernizing and digitizing management of information and record providing information would take several days often exceeding the legal deadlines.

(g) Government departments should be entrusted responsibility to make the implementation of RTI easy for applicants seeking information rather than tough procedures.

(h) Inculcation of political will is necessary for judicious working of RTI act. The Bureaucrats must come forward to help the distressed citizens.

(i) It is the moral responsibility of the government to protect RTI activists and users and to take legal action against the attackers.

(j) There is also need strong and robust monitoring and evaluation system. It will help periodically review implementation of the law and provide feedback to government agencies to address the shortcomings.

(k) There should be proper coordination among state information commissioner and departments for the effective implementation of RTI act.

(l) It is a recognized fact that for enabling and effective implementation of RTI act, the central and state information commissions need to strengthen their technical and IT capability.

(m) Fast action to be taken to integrate different websites of all information commissions through a common IT gateway or national portal on RTI. This will prove to be grateful to common citizens.

(n) Chief information commissioners should have frequent interaction with all information commissioners so that approach of all information commissioners may be similar in dealing with complaints before them.

(o) According to the act it is mandatory to provide the information in the given time frame of 30 days. Since the information system is not integrated, therefore it becomes difficult to provide information in the given time. Moreover, many departments could not prepare themselves to respond according to the act.

(p) Training of officials of all departments and representatives of public authorities is essentially required so that they are made aware of their duties and obligations under the act.

(q) Government of India should set up a National RTI council, which has members, people from various states, so that problems in implementation the RTI can be monitored regularly.

(r) Last but not the least, political influence may anomalies in the functions of high level officials, so they have to maintain integrity by ignoring the vested interest.(20)

Conclusion

Thus it can be rightly mentioned that Right to Information act is an agent of good governance and transparent government .It makes administration more accountable to the people. It makes people aware of administration and gives them an opportunity to take part in decision making process. It promoted democratic ideology by promoting openness and transparency in the administration. It reduces the chances of corruption and abuse of

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authority by public servants. Since the act is prepared for people's interest, hence it success also depends on how they exercise the act. Moreover, there is need active participation from people, NGO's, civil society groups, coordination among RTI officials, integrity among government departments and political will from government and elected leaders.

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