



Right To Information: An Effective Tool To Establish Good Governance

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ABSTRACT

Every single human being possesses a fundamental right known as the "right to information." Michel Foucault, a famous French philosopher, formerly held the opinion that power is generated from knowledge, and information is the fundamental component of knowledge. People's perspectives shift as a result of exposure to new information, which also enables them to better navigate the challenges of the modern world. The transition of governance into good governance is developed via the public having unrestricted access to information and participating in the decisions that the government makes. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the government to keep citizens informed about the goings-on within the government on a daily basis. The Right to Information Act of 2005 was approved by the Indian Parliament with the goals of promoting Accountability and Transparency, bolstering Democratic Principles of Polity, and cutting down on Corruption. In this article, an attempt is made to draw attention to the role that RTI plays in effective governance and to provide some recommendations for the effective operation of RTI legislation.

Keywords: Right to Information Act, Competent, Foster.

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I. INTRODUCTION

"to provide for laying out a realistic regime of access to information for citizens," as stated in the freedom to information act 2005 (RTI), which is a legislation that was passed by the Indian parliament in 2005. Except for the state of Jammu & Kashmir, the Act is applicable to India's union territories as well as its individual states. The Jammu and Kashmir Right to Information Act 2009 is the state's own legislation on access to public records. Any person may make a request for information to a "public authority," which is defined under the act as a body of government or a "instrumentality of state," and the "public authority" is obligated to respond swiftly or within 30 days, whichever comes first.

Every individual possesses the inherent and inalienable right to access to information. Every citizen possesses the right to freedom of expression and opinion in a nation that practises democratic principles. This right comprises the right to have a public opinion as well as the right to seek, receive, and transmit information and ideas to and from public authorities. In a civilised society, having access to knowledge that is both relevant and applicable can assist citizens in leading dignified lives. The Right to Information Act of 2005 provides every individual with the ability to access public information that is included inside government documents. Before the Central Act was enforced on October 12, 2005, people of just nine states in the country had access to this right. Since then, however, every person in the country has access to it, making it a right that is now available to all. The freedom of information serves to increase openness in the administration, which in turn contributes to the advancement of transparency in state activities, helps to hold the government more responsible, and eventually helps to eliminate instances of corruption. Governance, as well as the concept of "good governance," has recently emerged as a central topic of conversation and debate. The role of government throughout the history of man is one that has been extremely important. Governance refers to both the action and the process through which a government exercises control over its citizens. It is common knowledge that effective administration is essential. It has acknowledged that the state and all of its institutions need to be working for the benefit of the people. Every democracy rests on its ability to maintain sound administrative

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practises. The concept of "Good Governance" encompasses a broad variety of topics, including the political, administrative, judicial, and economic spheres. There is a strong connection between effective governance and the right to access information. Transparency, accountability, and responsiveness are the three defining characteristics of good governance. As a direct result of this, the citizen's right to information is increasingly being acknowledged as a vital vehicle to promote openness, transparency, and accountability in the management of government affairs. The only component of a representational system of government is the general population. The Right to Information Act (RTI) has been crucial in the nation's administration and has been the catalyst for a social revolution in the background. Users of the RTI programme and activists in virtually every region of the nation are posing inquiries on a wide range of topics. The Act has resulted in a more positive influence on the quality of life of those who are economically excluded and underprivileged. The Act has been responsible for favourable shifts in the government throughout the course of the previous five years. Today, information is the most important resource for every government. In order to successfully accomplish the objective of good governance, it is necessary for there to be openness and efficiency within the governance system.

In his commentary on the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States, Thomas Enderson made the observation that the society makes use of the freedom of information and communication to safeguard particular values. These values may be categorized into four different broad groups. The first of these is assuring individual self-fulfillment, the second set of values focuses on methods of obtaining the truth, the third set of values addresses a method of securing the participation of members in the society in social and political decision making, and the fourth set of values seeks to maintain the equilibrium between stability and change in the society.

Good Governance

The idea of good governance is not a recent development. In his work Arthashastra, Kautilya elaborated on the characteristics of a king who presides over a state that is successfully governed, writing that "in the happiness of his subjects lies his happiness, in their welfare his welfare, whatever pleases himself, he does not consider as good, but whatever pleases his subjects he considers as good," and that "in the happiness of his subjects lies his happiness." The idea of "Su-raj" was first introduced to the world by Mahatma Gandhi. Therefore, when people talk about good governance, they usually mean the process of administering the government in an efficient manner. When compared to a simple good government, it is qualitatively and conceptually superior.

Right to Information and Good Governance

The Right to Know Act is a game-changing piece of legislation that lifts the veil of secrecy that has been placed over the administrative process. It is an efficient method for advancing democratic principles and ideals. The act constitutes an effective weapon in the battle against corruption. The Second Administrative Reform Commission had been aware of the significance of this fact, and as a result, they had developed a comprehensive plan for reforming the public administrative system. Right to Information: Master Key to Good Governance is the title of the first report that was produced by the second Administrative Reform Commission that was established by the Indian government. Openness and accountability are defining characteristics of good governance, and the most effective method for ensuring transparency and accountability in government is to encourage a greater level of informed engagement on the part of the populace. The people are the most important stakeholder in government, and they have an essential part to play in the process. Therefore, it is of the utmost importance that individuals have the right to be informed about the actions of their government.

In the parts that follow, this article will describe how the Right to Information Act (RTI Act) has helped decrease corruption, promoted good governance, improved participatory democracy, and empowered the ordinary people.

OBJECTIVES

1. Discuss major hindrances to good governance like corruption, population growth and culture of violence.
2. Appreciate the role of citizens in the process of good governance.

Promotes transparency and good governance

The right to information gives individuals the ability to monitor the performance of their governments and those serving in public posts. The public ought to be made aware, in an open and transparent manner, of what is going to happen as well as what has already occurred. Any effective government must be built on a foundation of openness and honesty. The public has a duty and a right to be informed about the goals and initiatives of the government. Every single communication that the government has with its citizens ought to be

made public. Access to information is one of the most important factors that contribute to transparency, which can be defined as the practice of making information readily available to the general public and providing clarity on the operations of governmental institutions. The purpose of the Right to Information Act is to encourage accountability and openness within the government by opening up the process of decision making at the various levels of government. Despite the fact that some branches of the federal government are exempted from the provisions of this legislation, any information that pertains to a breach of human rights can still be requested. Even information from a private authority must go via the controlling authority before it can be requested, and the controlling authority is the one that must deliver the notice to the institution that is in question in accordance with Section 11 of the Act. Through their own experiences, most nations have come to the conclusion that expanding the citizens' access to information has a positive impact on the degree to which the government is receptive to the requirements of the community. This, in turn, makes it easier to immediately address the problems of the public, which in turn boosts the people's feeling of goodwill toward the government. The operation of government is never completely transparent anywhere in the world, although nations with capitalist economies and democracies tend to have a higher degree of openness than authoritarian states.

Promotes Accountability

Good governance must always adhere to the principle of accountability. It is impossible to determine the cause of any failed progress when accountability is lacking. It is not just the government that must answer to the people; the institutions of the business sector must do so as well. Knowledge is power, and the Right to Information Act ensures that the government is accountable to its citizens and operates in an open and transparent manner. 16 It is necessary to maintain a framework in order to maintain accountability; this guarantees that political leaders and public officials are held responsible for their actions, performances, and utilisation of public resources. If they are unable to demonstrate responsibility, both their power and authority will be rendered null and void. The RTI Act gave citizens the ability to question public authorities on the effectiveness of their work or the lack thereof. Therefore, accountability in government always leads to increased effectiveness and a greater sense of duty among officials. 118 The RTI Act, in its current iteration, is powerful enough to even go after the foundations upon which corruption is built. As long as its seeds are planted at the highest level, there will always be corruption at the lesser levels. This cannot be avoided. It is possible to use the RTI Act in order to uncover these seeds of corruption, which can then help to control corruption at lower levels.

Participation

The idea of participation is to include every member of a community in the process of governance. A strong foundation for effective government must be laid by both men and women. A representative democracy does not entail the rule of a selected few; rather, it must take into consideration the interests of all segments of society, particularly the most vulnerable segments of society. The Right to Information will continue to be a non-starter in the absence of people's engagement in it. Many different meanings can be attached to the concept of participation. On one hand, researchers take participation to mean simply engaging with any particular activity (Bishop & Davis 2002; Paul 1987). On the other hand, researchers define participation as a process through which people influence and share control over development initiatives. Bishop & Davis 2002; Paul 1987 (Arnstein 1971; Shand&Arnberg 1996; World Bank 1996). The Right to Information Act establishes a channel of communication between the general public and their government. For there to be good governance, it is necessary to allow for the participation of civil society in the process of formulating development strategies, as well as the participation of communities and groups that will be directly impacted by these strategies in the process of designing and carrying out the projects and programmes themselves. Even in situations in which a project would only have a secondary influence on a certain area or demographic group, there should still be a consultation procedure that takes those people's opinions into consideration. Citizens who have an understanding of public affairs and the activities of their government are in a better position to have their voices heard on matters that have an impact on their lives; in other words, they may participate in the operations of their government. The right to knowledge empowers individuals to participate in political and economic decision-making, which in turn helps to improve democracies. The RTI Act made it easier for everyday citizens to participate in government decisions and actively encouraged them to do so. People in the past had the desire to participate in what are now considered "official activities," but they lacked the means to do so. The Right to Information Act, on the other hand, makes it easier for everyday people to get involved in government.

Accessibility

All parts of the community will have more simpler access to information on government agencies' services, budgets, and policies as a result of the Right to Information, which will make it feasible for information to be easily accessed. A common low-income individual participates in the debate on the

government's approach to economic growth. By making it simpler for residents to obtain information, the Right to Information Act helps contribute to the process of nation-building. This is because it narrows the long-standing gap that has existed between citizens and the administration. Every citizen is informed about the day-to-day operations of the government. When individuals have access to information on the delivery of services and other duties of the government, they are aware of what they are entitled to, as well as how and where to demand that they be provided with the services and other benefits to which they are entitled. Prior to the implementation of RTI, the people's participation in government activities was restricted to the election of their leaders, and they had no right to information on the operations of the government. However, the RTI statute provided the general public with a long-overdue right to inquire about the activities of their government, and authorities within that government are obligated to cooperate with individuals in any way possible. The act was accorded the status of a basic right, which may be deduced from the fact that it plays an essential role in ensuring that the government is able to carry out its duties effectively.

Empowerment

It is necessary to decentralise authority in order to guarantee progress in regional domains and the involvement of the people. This concept is sometimes referred to as "people empowerment." Participation in political and economic processes, as well as the capacity to make well-informed decisions, were both severely limited in India prior to the passage of the Right to Information Act. As a direct result of this, commoners continue to be unaware of the different plans being implemented and are unable to put up a fight when their rights become compromised. At the same time, most individuals are unaware of the procedures and channels via which they might lawfully acquire the rights to which they are legally entitled from the relevant agencies.

Michel Foucault, a French philosopher, held the belief that power stems from knowledge, with information serving as the fundamental building block of knowledge. Therefore, in this day and age, where the information revolution is driven by technology, empowerment implies access to information. When it comes to information resources, the first thing a dictatorial government does is try to monopolies them and restrict people's access to them, which goes against the fundamental concept of good governance, which is that information should be free to flow. It is inevitable that the concentration of information will lead to the centralization of power. People are now able to have a voice in the decision-making process thanks to the passage of the Right to Information Act, which also gives individuals access to information on the decisions that the government makes. People are given more influence as a result of the Right to Information Act, which eliminates needless opacity surrounding the decision-making process of the government.

Equity and inclusiveness

Another essential component of successful governance is having this quality. It suggests that everyone is a part of the government, and that individuals do not feel excluded from the main stream of society as a result. Everyone should have the same standing in the decisions that the government makes. In addition, the Right to Information Act does not differentiate between wealthy and impoverished persons in any way, and it applies to all people living in India. It has always played a significant part in the struggle against injustice, cruel action, and unequal treatment of people.

Role of RTI in Reducing Corruption in India

The most difficult problem facing India right now is the widespread problem of corruption. It involves not just those working at lower levels, but also those working at higher levels, such as ministers and bureaucrats. The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has been asked to investigate and take appropriate action over a significant number of instances of corruption in which ministers played a role. Lack of transparency and communication creates an environment that is fertile ground for corrupt practices and abuses of power. Through the encouragement of openness and responsibility The right to knowledge puts a stop to abuses of this kind. The cycle of poverty is only perpetuated and made worse by corrupt practices, which in turn hurt the poor. It fosters an atmosphere of mistrust between the people and the government, which has a negative impact on development and puts democratic governance at risk. There is a level of transparency in the operations of governmental departments that has never been seen before as a result of the RTI policy. Because of this, there is a better awareness of the process by which decisions are made, as well as more responsibility on the part of the government. Because of this, there has been less corruption throughout the country. According to India's Prime Minister, there is widespread corruption at every level of government, including the political and administrative spheres. In his address to the IAS probationers of 2006 in 2007, Indian Prime Minister Dr. Man Mohan Singh 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 obstacles, then there are obstacles in our nation, in the quality of our government, and in the procedures of our governance. It is a well-known reality that there is a significant amount of corruption in both the political and

administrative spheres of society. We have no choice except to face it straight on." "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, regardless of ranks and status," Dr. Man Mohan Singh government has rightly remarked that "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 dish The penalty for corrupt behavior should be severe; at the very least, the offender should be fired from their position. Therefore, the right to information is both an essential tool and a powerful weapon in the hands of the average person in the battle against corruption. Because to the RTI, the functioning of the government has been much more streamlined, transparent, responsible, and participatory to the general populace. At the end, we claim that RTI creates a pathway to the people, through whom he connects to the government, so transforming governance into good governance.

II. CONCLUSION

The Right to Know Act is a key factor in the maintenance of effective government. The RTI increases the accountability of the administration to the general public. The administration raises the population's awareness of itself and provides them with opportunities to participate in decision-making processes. By encouraging openness and transparency inside the administrative structure, the RTI served to spread democratic ideas. Eliminating the need for the act altogether is the most effective strategy for addressing all of these problems while simultaneously advancing the cause of good governance. Instead of waiting for the general populace to seek out the facts on their own, the governments ought to voluntarily make all of the information available to the general populace. Not only would it encourage excellent administration, but it will also enhance trust between the government and the people it governs.

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