

Right to Information (RTI) is an act of the Parliament of India which sets out the rules and procedures regarding citizens' right to information. It replaced the former Freedom of Information Act, 2002. Under the provisions of RTI Act, any citizen of India may request information from a "public authority" (a body of Government or "instrumentality of State") which is required to reply expeditiously or within thirty days. In case of matter involving a petitioner's life and liberty, the information has to be provided within 48 hours. The Act also requires every public authority to computerise their records for wide dissemination and to proactively certain categories of information so that the citizens need minimum recourse to request for information formally.

Advantages:

Transparency: It ensures the right of the citizens to acquire as much information they want regarding the governmental activities, rules and regulations, etc. This creates a room for better communication between the public authorities and the citizens.

Citizen-centric approach: Due to the enforcement of this Act, the authorities are sure to let out information as asked for by the citizens and this made the authorities to think more before taking any random step.

Availability of Information: RTI created an easy form of letting out information to the person concerned thus resulting in accessibility of information relating to governmental activity to the person who seeks for such information. Moreover, the application for information is to be responded by the public servants within 30 days of application.

Reduction in Corruption: As all the information is accessible, the graph to that of corruption has taken a down-curve.

Disadvantages:

Many departments of Government have appointed more than necessary public information officers (PIOs), which results in difficulty to gain information.

Difficulty to people's access to the PIOs. Without security pass people are not allowed to meet the PIOs and at times they are made to wait for hours for security passes.

It also has been reported that various ministries and departments of the government are insisting that they will only accept the specific forms that they have designed. The law, however, does not provide for a form or does not authorize the public authorities to prescribe forms. Therefore, whereas they can have recommendatory formats, they must accept all requests even if they are on plain paper. Perhaps the DoPT (Department of Personnel and Training) should be asked to send a circular accordingly.