

## **Awareness of Right to Information Act-2005 Among Elementary School Teachers in Relation to Gender and Type of School**

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### **Abstract**

The right to information act 2005 is an act of the parliament of Indian “to provide for setting out the practical regime of right to information for citizen under the provisions of the act any citizen may request information from a “public authority” (a body of government or instrumentality of state). Which is require to computerize their records for wide dissemination and to pro-actively public certain categories of information, so that the citizens need minimum recourse to request for information formally. Right to information is a part of fundamental rights under article 19(1) of the constitution. Article 19(1) says that every citizen has freedom of speech and expression. As early as in 1976, the Supreme Court said in case of Raj narain vs. state of up, that people cannot speak or express them, unless they know. Therefore RTI is embedded in article 19. In the same case, Supreme Court further said that India is a democratic country. People are the masters. Therefore, masters have the right to know how the governments meet to serve them and are functioning. Further, every citizen pays taxes. Even a beggar on the street pays tax (In the form of sale tax, excise duty etc). When he buys a piece of soap in the market the citizen, therefore, have a right to know how their money was being spent. These three principals were laid down by the Supreme Court while saying that RTI is a part of our fundamental rights. Now the question areas when does RTI come into force and the areas which is covered under the right to information act? RTI comes into force on 12<sup>th</sup> Oct, 2005(120<sup>th</sup> day of its enactment on 15<sup>th</sup> June, 2005). Some provisions have come to force with immediate effect viz. obligations of public authorities, designation of public information officers and assistant public information officers and constitution of central information commission, constitution of the state information commission, and non applicability of the act to intelligence and security organizations and powers to make rules to carry out the provisions of act.

The act applies to all the states and union territories of India except the state of Jammu and Kashmir because Jammu and Kashmir has its own act called Jammu and Kashmir act 2009. According to RTI, information means any material in any form including records, documents, memo's, emails, books, contracts reports, paper samples, models, data material held in any electronic form and information relating to any private body which can be accessed by a public authority under any other law for the time being enforced. Today education is considered an important public function and the state is seen as the chief provider of education through the allocation of substantial budgetary resources and regulating the provision of education. The prominent role of the state in fulfilling the provision of education. The prominent role of the state in fulfilling the right to education is enshrined in 1966. Traditionally education has been the duty of child's parents, however, with the rise of system of education, the roler of parents has diminished with regard to realizing the right to education. The world declaration on Education for all states that, “Partnerships between government and non-government organizations, the

private sector, local communities, religious groups and families are necessary.”For the completion of the long cherished goal of univesalization of elementary education Sarv Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) came in to the action in the year 2002. It promises to change the face of the elementary education sector of the country and aims to provide useful and quality elementary education to all childrean in the age group of 6-14 by 2020. The SSA is an effort to recognize the need for improving the performance of school system and to provide community owned quality elementary education in the mission mode. The SSA works with an objective of sending all the children back to school camp by 2003, complition five years of primary schooling by 20017 and elementary schooling by 2020. Main focus of the SSA has been on elementary education with emphasis on education of life and universal retention by 2020. The realization of education on a national level may be achieved through compulsory education of more specifically free and compulsory primary education as stated in both the universal declaration of human rights and the international covenant on economics, social and cultural rights. Formal education is given to everybody without any discrimination of sex, caste, creed and colour.

### **RIGHT TO INFORMATION INCLUDES FOLLOWING LAWS**

- Inspect document, record and work.
- Take notes, extracts all certified copies of documents or records.
- Take certified sample of material.
- Obtain information in the form of printouts, floppies, tapes, video cassettes or in any other electronic mode or through printouts.

An act provide for setting out the practical regime of right to information act 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 central information and state information and state information commission and for matters connected there with or incidental to.

### **RIGHT TO INFORMATION ACT 2005 EMPOWERS EVERY CITIZEN TO**

- Ask any question from the government or seek any information.
- Take copies of any government document.
- Inspect any government work.
- Take samples of material of any government work.

### **OBJECTIVES OF THE RTI**

- To promote transparency and accountability in working of every public authority.
- To set up a practical regime for giving citizens access to information that is under the control of public authority.

### **PURPOSES OF RTI**

- 1) RTI empowers every citizen to ask any question from the government or seek any information. Take copies of any government document inspects any government documents. Take samples of materials of any government documents.

- 2) You can seek information from any department of central or state government, from panchayate raj institutions and from any other organization of institution(including NGO's that is established, constituted, owned, controlled or substantially financed, directly or indirectly, by the state or central government(section2a or h).
- 3) In each department, at least one office has been designated as a public information officer (PIO's). He or she accepts the request forms and provides information sought by the people (section5 (1)).
- 4) In addition, in each sub-district or divisional level there are assistant public information officer(APIO) who receive requests for information and appeals against decisions of public information officers, and then send them to the appropriate authorities (section5(2)).
- 5) Any person seeking information should file an application in writing or through electronic means in English or Hindi (or in the official language of the area) along with the application fees with the PIO or APIO section 6(1).
- 6) Where a request cannot be made in writing the PIO is supposed to render all reasonable assistance to the person making the request orally to reduce the same in writing (section 6(1)).
- 7) Whether the applicant is deaf, blind or otherwise impaired, the public authority is supposed provide assistance to enable to access to information, including providing such assistance as may be appropriate for the inspection (section7 (4)).
- 8) Besides the applicant contact detail, the applicant is not required to either give any reasons for requesting the information or any other personal details (section 6(2)).
- 9) A reasonable application fee (Rs 10/-) as per prescribed by the central government, where as in other states the fee amount may vary. However, no fees is chargeable from persons below the poverty line (section7 (5)), or if the information is provided after the prescribed periods section7 (6).
- 10) A fee will be charged for obtaining a copy of the documents. Central government has prescribed fees of Rs 2/- for each page created and copied. In some states the charges may vary. If the information is provided in the stipulated time limit then the information will be provided free (U/S 7(6)).
- 11) If the PIO fees that the sought information does not pertain to his department then it shall be its responsibility to forward the application to the related / relevant department within five days and also inform the applicant about the same. In such instance, the stipulated time limit for provision of information would be 35 days (U/S 6(3)).
- 12) In case of PIO does not furnish information within the prescribed period or unreasonably troubles the applicant files a complaint against him with the information permission.
- 13) In case a PIO does not have any reasonable cause files to receive an application for information, derive a request for information, derive a request for information, knowing gives incorrect, incomplete or misleading information or high fees furnishing the information's the applicant can files a direct complaint to the central or state information commission.
- 14) The PIO can deny information in some cases/matters. The various exemptions from disclosure of information are listed in section 8 of the RTI act, 2005.

- 15) If the sought information is in public interest then the exemptions enumerated in section 8 of RTI act, 2005 can also be disclosed.
- 16) Any information that cannot be denied to parliament or legislative assembly cannot be denied to a common citizen.
- 17) In case a person fails to get a response from the PIO within the prescribed period or is aggrieved by the response received, or misuses section 8 of the act, then he/she can file an appeal with an officer superior in rank to PIO. (First appellate authority)(Section 19(1)).
- 18) If the appellate is not happy with the first appeal he/she can file a second appeal with the state information commission or central information commission within 60 days (U/S)19(3).
- 19) If a PIO fails to furnish the information ask for under the act or fails to communicate the rejection order, within the time specified, the PIO will be liable to pay penalty of Rs250/- per day for each day of delay, subject to a maximum rupees 25,000/- (section 20(1)). The information commission would recommend disciplinary action against the concerned PIO, under the service rules applicable to him/her (section 20(2)).
- 20) RTI empowers every citizen to ask any question from the government or seek any information. Take copies of any government document inspects any government documents. Take samples of materials of any government documents.

## **POWERS**

The RTI act empowers applicant citizens to:

- To obtain copies of permissible government documents.
- Inspect permissible government documents.
- Inspect permissible government works and obtain samples.

## **Review of Related Literature**

Rampal, Anjali (2007) studied the Human Rights education awareness among high schools teachers of Punjab schools education board in rural and urban area. The objective of the study was to assess the level of awareness of Human Rights education amongst high school teachers of rural areas and of urban areas. She has found that significant difference exist in the level of awareness of Human Rights education amongst teachers from rural areas and student from urban areas.

Rena (2007) stated in his study that there was need to change the educational pattern in India. The study revealed that children dropped out schools to assist in household and agricultural activities. The study also recommended that budgetary allocation should increase so as to encourage the primary education participation and provide some form of financial assistance to the students .

Yadav, Parmanand (2007) in his article titled universal declaration of Human Rights and its impact on Indian constitution mentioned that systematized organized and awakened social mind can be developed only through the right type of education appropriate awareness can be created to make life and its environment creative , constructive and

progressive . In order to bring such a state of mind and fostering of scientific attitude among individuals for the growth and the development of Human Rights values is essential.

Singh, Krishan (2008) carried out a study on the relationship between communality and constitutional values among the students of higher elementary schools. The objective of the research was to study the development of constitutional values among higher elementary students and factors affecting it . The conclusion of the study was that there is inverse relationship between communality and constitutional values of higher secondary students.

Kaur Sarabjit (2008) conducted a study of political awareness among urban and rural students of secondary stage. The objective of the study was to find out the level of political awareness among male and female students. The main findings of her study was that there is more political awareness among male students then the female students. The study also revealed that the student from the urban areas have more political awareness them the students from the rural areas.

Srivastava, Asheesh (2008) in his article titled “concerns of child Right” mentioned that Human Rights are essential for full human development . Without the compulsion of law and fair administration of justice, Human Right laws are not more than a piece of written paper. Laws alone can not guarantee Human Rights. A decent standard of living, adequate nutrition, health care, education, decent work and protection against calamities are needed to be provided. Therefore the need of the hour is to build a culture of awareness about Rights.

Soal,Ruhi (2010) found that there was a major problem in the development of India is primary education, who revealed that there is a need to introduce reforms in primary education and hence to increase budgetary amount high for primary education. Government to carry out evaluation of Rights to Information Act:

New Delhi two years after it come into force, the government has decided to conduct a detailed evaluation of the Rights to Information (RTI ) Act. Which, it says, has won “immense”public response.

A review of literature related to present study indicated that most of the studies have been conducted to the political awareness among the students and teachers. But as far as study of awareness of Right to Information is concerned , very little work has been done . This act has been recently implemented. So, the investigator felt that there was an urgent need to check the awareness level of elementary schools teacher regarding Rights to Information Act. Hence , the investigator under took present study to explore the awareness of Right to Information Act among elementary schools teachers.

### **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

- To study the awareness of right to information act-2005 among elementary school teachers.
- To compare government and private elementary school teachers regarding their awareness above right to information act-2005.

- To compare the level of awareness of rural and urban elementary school teachers regarding their awareness about right to information act-2005.
- To study whether male and female elementary school teachers differ in their awareness regarding right to information act-2005.

### **HYPOTHESES**

- More than 60% of elementary school teachers are aware of right to information act-2005.
- Government and private elementary school teachers do not differ significantly regarding their awareness about right to information act-2005.
- Rural and urban elementary school teachers do not differ significantly regarding their awareness about right to information act-2005.
- Male and female elementary school teachers differ significantly with respect to their awareness about right to information act-2005.

### **DESIGN OF THE STUDY**

The present study falls under the domain of survey or descriptive type research as it intends to study the Awareness of Right to Information Act among elementary school teachers

### **SAMPLING**

Purposive sampling technique was used for the selection of data.

### **TOOL USED**

A tool in shape of a self-prepared questionnaire was used to assess the awareness of Right to Information Act among elementary school teachers.

### **DATA COLLECTION**

A sample of 200 elementary school teachers of government and private school was involved in the present study.

### **STATISTICAL TECHNIQUES USED**

- 1. Descriptive statistics.**  
Mean and standard deviation were used to analyze the data.
- 2. Inferential statistics**  
't' test was applied to compare the results obtained through descriptive statistics.
- 3. Graphic statistics**  
Bar graphs were plotted to have a pictorial view of the data

### ***ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS***

Collection of data presents merely a stock of facts unless it is analyzed and interpreted properly. When different techniques of analysis is applied to these facts, these begin to speak what the investigator wants to draw out of these. The analysis of the complex factors into the simple ones and their interpretation fulfill the desired purpose and objectives.

**HYPOTHESIS-I**

**Government and private elementary school teachers do not differ significantly regarding their awareness about right to information act-2005.**

In order to test the hypothesis-1, data was obtained with the help of questionnaire and scores were entered in the tables. Mean and standard deviation were calculated. The hypothesis was examined by applying ‘t’ test. The results of analysis are being shown in table1.

**Table 1**

**SHOWING t-VALUE, MEAN AND STANDARD DEVIATION OF SCORES OBTAINED BY GOVERNMENT AND PRIVATE TEACHERS ON AWARENESS SCALE FOR RIGHT TO INFORMATION ACT-2005 ( N=100 )**

<b>Variable</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>S.D</b>
Government	<b>100</b>	<b>7.25</b>	<b>5.99</b>
Private	<b>100</b>	<b>6.95</b>	<b>4.51</b>

  

<b>t</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>
<b>0.41</b>	<b>Not significant at 0.05 and 0.01 level</b>

Hence Hypothesis I “ Govt. and private elementary school teachers do not differ significantly regarding their awareness for right to information act” is not rejected.

Table 1 reveals that the value of ‘t’ is 0.41 which is not significant at 0.5 level of significance. However , mean scores of govt. elementary school teachers is 7.25 which is more as compared to the mean scores 6.95 of teachers of private elementary schools. This implies that teachers of govt. elementary schools are more aware regarding right to information act as compared to private elementary school teachers. Thus awareness scores may be due to the fact that newspaper, T.V, internet, magazines etc are easily available at work place as well as at home. So our hypothesis stands accepted.

**HYPOTHESIS-II**

**Rural and Urban elementary school teachers do not differ significantly regarding their awareness about right to information act-2005.**

Mean and standard deviation were calculated. The hypothesis was examined by applying ‘t’ test. The results of analysis are being shown in table 2

**TABLE 2**

**t- VALUE MEAN STANDARD DEVIATION OF SCORES OBTAINED BY RURAL AND URBAN TEACHERS ON AWARENESS SCALE FOR RIGHT TO INFORMATION ACT-2005 ( N=100 )**

<b>Variable</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>S.D</b>
Urban	100	8.43	5.09
Rural	100	7.25	4.25

  

<b>t</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>
1.78	Not significant at 0.05 and 0.01 level

Hence Hypothesis II “ Rural and Urban elementary school teachers do not differ significantly

regarding their awareness for right to information act” is not rejected.

Table 2 reveals that the value of ‘t’ is 1.78 which is not significant at 0.5 level of significance. However , mean scores of Urban elementary school teachers is 8.43 which is more as compared to the mean scores 7.25 of teachers of Rural elementary schools. This implies that teachers of urban elementary schools are more aware regarding right to information act as compared to rural elementary school teachers. In urban areas, more facilities such as computer, internet, magazines, journals etc are easily available . Moreover they have access to well equipped libraries. Due to top competition among teachers, they have to keep their knowledge up to date. On the other hand rural teachers have less access to such facilities. So they are less aware from above discussion our hypothesis stands accepted.

**HYPOTHESIS-III**

**Male and Female elementary school teachers differ significantly regarding their awareness about right to information act-2005.**



In order to test the hypothesis-1, data was obtained with the help of questionnaire. Mean and standard deviation were calculated. The hypothesis was examined by applying ‘t’ test. The results of analysis are being shown in table 3.

**Table 3**

**SHOWING t-VALUE, MEAN AND STANDARD DEVIATION OF SCORES OBTAINED BY MALE AND FEMALE TEACHERS ON AWARENESS SCALE FOR RIGHT TO INFORMATION ACT-2005 ( N=100 )**

Variable	N	Mean	S.D
Male	100	8.45	5.25
Female	100	7.15	4.88
		<b>t</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>
		<b>0.02</b>	<b>Not significant at 0.05 and 0.01 level</b>

Hence Hypothesis III “ Male. and Female elementary school teachers do not differ significantly regarding their awareness for right to information act” is not rejected. Table 3 reveals that the value of ‘t’ is 0.02 which is not significant at 0.5 level of significance. However , mean scores of Male elementary school teachers is 8.45 which is more as compared to the mean scores 7.15 of teachers of Female elementary schools. This implies that male teachers of elementary schools are more aware regarding right to information act as compared to Female elementary school teachers. Male teachers are active and intensive reader of newspaper, magazines and get more time to listen news etc. They have much knowledge about the latest information on the other hand female elementary school teachers due to responsibilities of family and other work do not have time to explore the latest information. So they are less aware from above discussion our hypothesis stands not rejected .

**EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS:**

In term of scope as defined for the study and further clarified through subsequent consultant monitoring committee meeting included: The experience of the state to cover aspects related to constraints, institutional, infrastructural and information faced by the information providers in responding to results. The experience included constraints relating to accessing the information providers. The costs of obtaining information and responsiveness of the information. It was necessary to ascertain the problem faced in identifying and seeking relevant information by the ordinary citizen. It was also necessary to focus on the problem faced by the disadvantaged groups in particular.

### **The Scope of work entailed the following specific tasks**

1. Analysis and categorization of information sought under Right to information act.
2. Design of a robust methodology to study the states on a sample basis for studying in detail for a clear understanding on the implementation related experience.
3. Preparation of a state-wise ‘ State of Right to information act implementation matrix’ for the selected states indicating the compliance with the key expectations of the act.
4. Study of selected experiences, in detail so as to identify successful initiations and failure in the delivery system.
5. Analysis of the data on experiences of the providers and seekers of information for identification of generic problems.
6. Sharing the findings/analysis with the various stakeholder workshop preparation of the report with specific recommendation on the structural, institutional, “processual”, infrastructural and technological and people related changes.
7. Preparation of a detailed action/capacity building plan at the central and state government level. As per the right to information act of 2005, only Rs. 10/- fee is required to seek information from any public authority, but various government officials have complained of the huge cost they have to bear to divert resources and effort to answer right to information plans.
8. To assess the type of information sought and its classification into “personal information”, sought by employers, procurement related information sought without any apparent objective/purpose” and general information sought without specificity across section.
9. The study of trends in filling of right to information application or appeals across country. The government also wants an institution or organization to study the use of right to information act by different type of applicants. In case where applicant type is identifiable from the application.”
10. To determine the level of satisfaction among the people with the functioning of the act and the experience of public authorities at different levels in dealing with right to information applications and appeals the document has mentioned.

### **ROLE OF GOVERNMENT**

Section 26: the act enjoins the central government as also the state government of the union of India.

- Develop educational programmers for the public especially disadvantaged communities on RTI.
- Encourage public authorities to participate in the development and organizations of such programmers.
- Train officers and develop training programmers
- Compile and disseminate a user guide for the public in the respective official language.
- Public names, designation, postal address and contact details of PIO’s and other information. Such as notice regarding fees to be paid, remedies available in law if request is rejected.

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