



RIGHT TO INFORMATION ACT: AN OVERVIEW¹

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Abstract

Fair, Good & transparent governance, as a concept, is applicable to all sections of society such as the government, legislature, judiciary, the media, the private sector, the corporate sector, the co-operatives, societies registered under the Societies Registration Act, duly registered trusts, autonomous Institutes, organisations such as the trade unions and lastly the non government organisations (NGOs). Public accountability and transparency are part and parcel of fair governance and as relevant for the one as for the other. It is only when all these and various other sections of society conduct their affairs in a socially responsible manner that the objective of achieving larger good of the largest number of people in society can be achieved. Right to Information Act, 2005 represents a mile stone to encourage good governance in India and most revolutionary Act since Independence. It aims at promoting transparency and accountability in the working of every public authority. The present paper has an attempt to find out in what ways Right to Information Act is a powerful tool for good governance and also provides guidance to citizens in accessing the government information under this Act.

Key words: Good governance; Right to Information; Transparency; Accountability; Corruption , Constitutionalism

INTRODUCTION

In order to ensure greater and more effective access to information, the Govt resolved that the Freedom of Information Act, 2002 enacted by the Parliament needs to be made more progressive, participatory and meaningful. The National Advisory Council deliberated on the issue and suggested certain important changes to be incorporated in the existing Act to ensure smoother and greater access to information. The Govt decided to repeal the freedom of Information Act 2002. The present Act of 2005 provide an effective framework for effectuating the right of information recognised under Art 19 of the Constitution of India.

Governance is an all-inclusive term covering various aspects of the organization and structure of government, which have an impact on the efficiency of government and the delivery of public services, and incorporates accountability, transparency, financial devolution, political/administrative decentralization and administrative vigilance to check corruption. Good governance can be related to the basic goals of a society as enshrined in the form of Directive Principle of State Policy in the Constitution and other policy and plan documents. A faceless citizen is now blessed with a tool with the help of which he can now demand from the high and mighty in the government to know the details of every action they take, professedly on behalf of the people. - "if secrecy were to be observed in the functioning of government and the processes of government were to be kept hidden from public scrutiny and audit, it would tend to promote, propagate and encourage oppression,

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