
STUDY OF AWARENESS OF AWARENESS ABOUT RIGHT TO INFORMATION (RTI) ACT AMONG SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS IN CENTRAL INDIA

Prashant Thote

Gyanodaya Vidya Mandir, Narsingarh.

Abstract

The Right to information act 2005 in India is one of the most advanced information legislation in the world. The Act is based on the principle that all government information should transparent to the people. Due to this, democracy has taken to grass root level and it is a step for ensuring the participation common people in governance in the country. RTI refers to the right of every citizen to access information held by or under the control of public authorities. It is necessary that people should know about what is happening in their society. If the actions of the ruling government are hidden then the people cannot take a meaningful part in the affairs of the society. Access to information not only promotes openness, transparency and accountability in administration, but also facilitates active participation of people in democratic governance process.

The Right to Information act is a weapon for today's democratic citizens to be involved in every political decision which is made for the welfare of the people. For this every individual must know about the proper use of RTI Act. This study aimed to examine and compare the awareness among senior secondary school teachers about Right to Information act and its proper use on the basis of gender and locality. The data has been collected from 200 senior secondary school teachers from different schools of Central India with the help of self-structured RTI Awareness Inventory by following survey method. The results revealed that the secondary school teachers are moderately aware about RTI and they are less concerned with its proper use. It is also observed that there is significant difference among male-female and urban-rural teachers regarding the awareness about Right to Information Act.

Keywords : Awareness, Right to Information Act, school, Teachers , Gender, Locality

1. INTRODUCTION

The national campaign for people's right to information was initiated by social activists, journalists, lawyers, professionals, retired civil servants and academics , in 1996 with the objectives of a national law facilitating the exercise of the fundamental right to information (www.righttoinformation.info). The Government introduced the Freedom of Information Bill in Parliament, in 2002. This bill did not meet the expectation of the people. Then after over a number of amendments an act titled "Right to Information Act 2005" was enacted on 15 June 2005 and was came into force from 12 October 2005. Right to Information Act 2005 is 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. As per the Information act material in the form of documents, memos, e-mails, press release, circulars, orders, contracts, reports, data materials should be accesses to the citizen. The act covers central, state and local governments, and all bodies owned, controlled or substantially financed by the government or any non-government organization substantially financed, directly or indirectly by the appropriate Government. The information, which affect the sovereignty and integrity of India are not to be disclosed. Information, which relates to personal information the disclosure of which has no

relationship to any public activity or interest, or which, would cause unwarranted invasion of the privacy of the individual is also not supposed to be disclosed. The objective of the act is to hold government and their instrumentalities accountable to the governed and to contain corruption. With potential application in meeting government's obligations to provide information on request and proactively, e-governance is a viable option for public authorities to address the information needs of RTI Act (Devasher, 2005).

The RTI Act, 2005 is a revolutionary legislation in the history of democratic India. The Act has the unprecedented potential to transform governance and bring in accountability and transparency in the government functioning. It is also an instrument to herald participatory governance where citizen's can become active participants in the governance process rather than being mute spectators with little or no potential of demanding accountability from public institutions. The Right to Information Act, 2005 came into effect on October 12, 2005. This law empowered Indian citizens to seek information from public authorities thus making the government and its functionaries more accountable and responsible. The time taken to operationalise the act was inadequate to change the mindset of the people in government, create infrastructure, develop new processes and build capacity to deliver information under this Act. This has led to implementation issues. The State of Jharkhand came into existence in 2000. In 2001, the Jharkhand State Right to Information Committee, a group of civil society organizations, prepared a draft on Right to Information Bill. Jharkhand Government did not take necessary action to implement the Right to Information until the Central Freedom of Information Act was passed in December 2002. Although, Jharkhand administration implemented the RTI Act in 2005, its effect and impact have not been fully realized

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The following objectives are preferred to conduct this study

1. To find out the level of awareness on RTI among secondary school teachers of Central India
2. To find out the significant difference if any between the different groups of demographic variables such as – sex, teachers residence, location of school, types and nature of school in awareness on RTI.
3. To give suggestions to improve the level of awareness on RTI among Secondary school teachers

Hypotheses

1. The level of awareness on RTI among Secondary school teachers is very low.
2. There is a significant difference between the different groups of sex, residence, and location of school, types and nature of school in awareness on RTI among Secondary school teachers of Damoh District .
3. Secondary school teachers who are residing in rural area have more awareness on RTI.
4. Female teachers a have more awareness on RTI.

METHODOLOGY

Research design: The investigator preferred normative survey method to collect data from the Secondary school teachers .The investigator employed simple random sampling technique in order to collect data from the teachers teaching at higher secondary level.

Population: The population of the present study comprised of all the Secondary school teachers working in Damoh district affiliated to M.P. board and CBSE.

Sample: From the total population of Secondary school teachers in different schools of Damoh .Sample of 200 teachers been taken.

Tool: A self prepared questionnaire which contains 60 questions dealing with understanding, application and knowledge about Right to Information .Out of 60 questions, 12 questions are based on the rating scale, 20 right wrong types and rest is of multiple choices.

Statistical techniques: Mean, Standard Deviation and t-Test.

RESULT AND DISCUSSIONS

Table-1 Showing the awareness of Right to Education among secondary school teachers (N=200)

Scores	Frequency	Percentage	Category
30-40	60	30	Low awareness
40-50	40	20	Poor
50-60	20	10	Below average
60-70	30	15	Average
70-80	20	10	Above average
80-90	30	15	Good
90-100	00	00	High Awareness
Total	200	100	

Table – 2 Differences in the Level of RTE Awareness among the Teachers

Variables	N	Mean	SD	“t” value	Level of significance	
Age	Below 35	99	65	7.98	3.35	Significant
	Above 35	101	62	8.40		
Educational Qualification	M.Sc.	100	63	5.69	1.93	Not Significant
	M.A.	100	64	7.87		
Professional qualification	Diploma	53	66	6.55	1.35	Not Significant
	B.Ed	147	63	7.95		
Sex	Male	100	63	6.46	0.89	Not Significant
	Female	100	65	7.58		
Marriage status	Unmarried	43	66	7.83	1.78	Not Significant
	Married	157	65	7.52		

Area of residence	Rural	100	65	7.60	0.03	Not Significant
	Urban	100	66	7.66		
School Affiliation	M.P. Board	108	66	7.60	0.05	Not Significant
	CBSE	92	67	7.66		
Type of school	Government	99	69	9.65	1.89	Not Significant
	Private	101	68	6.66		
Medium of instructions	Hindi	100	68	7.89	3.53	Not Significant
	English	100	65	8.04		
Type of family	Nuclear	189	67	7.77	4.45	Significant
	Joint	11	66	8.95		
Reading habit (News paper/Circulars)	Regularly	56	68	8.98	4.45	Significant
	Rarely	144	66	8.52		

Table -3 Analysis of Choice of training by school teachers on Right to Information

Type of training	First Choice		Second Choice		Third Choice	
	No	%	No	%	No	%
Workshop	108	54	56	28	52	26
Literature	60	30	104	54	40	20
One to one	20	10	28	14	32	16
Peer Group	12	06	04	02	68	34

Table -1 show that 30% of schools teacher belong to “Low Awareness” Category which indicate that 30% school teachers do not have any awareness of the RTI. Further 20% teachers belong to category of the “poor awareness” which means they have a little bit knowledge about the Right to education act . 10% of the teachers come in the category of the “Below Average” which means , they have some awareness about RTI .Next is “average “ category which contains 15% teachers , it indicates that these 05% teachers are “Above average” .Only 30% teachers has a “Good knowledge of the RTI but none of them has “high awareness “ level. From analysis, out of these 100 scores, the mean score comes out 68.38 in case of school teachers which are very close to the average scores.

Table -2 shows that there exists no significant difference in the awareness level educational qualification, professional qualification, male and female , unmarried and married , rural an urban , M.P. and C.B.S. E. affiliated Government and private English and Hindi , Nuclear and joint family at both 0.01 and 0.05 level of significant difference. There is significant difference between the awareness level among the teacher who have age below 35 and above 35 .The awareness of young teacher is more than older teachers .The is significant difference the teachers having regular reading habit and rarely reading habit. Teachers having regular reading habit should high awareness toward Right to Information act. It is inferred from Table-3 that most of teachers first choice was workshop followed by per discussion and provide them literature

CONCLUSION

- The study reveals that there is a low level of awareness about RTI act among Secondary School Teachers in Central India.
- The awareness level among male and female teachers is quite equal.
- There is no significant difference between married and unmarried teachers regarding RTI act .
- The Right to Information act awareness level in science and art post graduate teachers is quite equal .
- The Right to Information act awareness level in Diploma and B.Ed teachers is quite equal .
- Urban and rural primary school teachers have same level of awareness towards Right to Information.
- Teacher teaching M.P. Board and C.B.S.E have equal awareness.
- Teachers teaching in Hindi and English medium school have quite equal awareness.
- Teachers having joint family having higher awareness level than nuclear family towards Right to Information act.
- Teachers having regular reading habit having higher awareness level towards Right to Information act

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY:

After retrospective view of the whole study, the investigators find that there were a few limitations that constricted the area of generalization of this study. The limitations were as given below:

1. Due to paucity of time and resources a sample of only 100 Secondary school teachers were taken which restricted the scope of generalization.
2. There are many variables which may affect the awareness of teachers towards RTI like some socioeconomic variables, intellectual level, and maturity level and so on. Though these variables were included in the study, they were not used in analysis in any way.
3. Since the awareness was measured on the basis of fixed responses, the teachers might have given socially accepted responses instead of giving correct responses.
4. Only a very few schools affiliated to CBSE and MP board were selected in this study.
5. Some respondents put tick mark against more than one alternative and sometimes they left some of the items unanswered which presented difficulty in accurate analysis of data.
6. The biggest limitation was that some teachers consulted with each other while making their choice. So the result might have got affected due to this.
7. Present study was conducted only in one state therefore more empirical evidences will be required from more states before ample generalization may be made .In light of this , it is suggested that a similar but more elaborate study may be conducted using a larger sample and covering more states in India

RECOMMENDATIONS

- (1) A Workshop and seminars should be conducted at school level to improve the awareness
- (2) Literature should be provided preferable in the mother tongue so that they may read and understand the Right to Information Act clearly .

REFERENCES

1. Devasher, M (2005). E-governance as a Tool to Implement Right to Information, Conflux 2005: The E-Government Conference, New Delhi, October 17-19, 2005.
2. [http:// www.righttoinformation.info](http://www.righttoinformation.info) (accessed in January 2007)
3. [http:// www.dae.gov.in](http://www.dae.gov.in) (accessed in February2013)
4. [http:// nwda.gov.in](http://nwda.gov.in) (accessed in February 2013)
5. [http:// mib.nic.in](http://mib.nic.in) (accessed in February 2013)