

STUDY ABOUT THE AWARENESS LEVEL AMONG EDUCATED PEOPLE ABOUT “RIGHT TO INFORMATION ACT”

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ABSTRACT

The Right to Information Act 2005 is a weapon given to every citizen of India for bringing transparency in the system with the involvement in every political decision which is made for the welfare of the people. Access to information not only promotes openness, transparency and accountability in administration, but it facilitates active participation of people in democratic governance process. For this, every individual and specially educated people should know about the proper use of RTI Act. This study aimed to examine the awareness among educated people about Right to Information Act 2005 and its proper use. The results revealed that the awareness level of educated people regarding RTI Act is very poor and government needs to do a lot for increasing the awareness.

KEYWORDS: Right to Information Act, Awareness, Educated People.

INTRODUCTION

MEANING & DEFINITION OF RTI

The Right to Information Act (RTI) is an Act of the Parliament of India "to provide for setting out the practical regime of right to information for citizens" [5 (p.1027)]. It is also known as 'Right to know' and 'Freedom of Information'. Freedom of information is not only limited to

public of India but similar acts also exist in other countries like USA, UK and Japan. In these countries the implementation of such act has taken more than one year. However, in India the RTI Act, 2005 was implemented in just four months.

Table 1. Time taken by Various Countries in Implementation of Acts similar to RTI [12]

Country	India	USA	UK	Japan
Title of the Act	Right to Information Act	Freedom of Information Act	Freedom of Information Act	Freedom of Information Act
Date of Enactment	15 th Jun 2005	4 th Jul 1966	30 th Nov 2000	May 1999
Date of Implementation	12 th Oct 2005	4 th Jul 1967	Jan 2005	Apr 2001
Time of Implementation	4 Months	1 Year	4 Year	2 Years
Delivery of Information	30 Days	20 Days	20 Days	30 Days

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This fast implementation encourages to know the problems (if any) faced by the organization due to the implementation of RTI Act. The time taken by these countries in implementation of such act is shown below in the table [7 (p.297)].

The Right to Information Act applies to all States and Union Territories of India except the State of Jammu and Kashmir but Kashmir has its own statute called Jammu & Kashmir Right to Information Act, 2009 [6 (p.9)]. Under the provisions of the RTI Act 2005, any citizen may request information from a "public authority" which is required to reply expeditiously or within thirty days.

SALIENT FEATURE OF RTI ACT 2005

The Right to Information Act contains six chapters and two schedules. Title of Chapter 1 is 'Preliminary' and it explains various terms like appropriate government, central information commission, central public information officer, chief information commissioner, public authority, information, record, state information commission, third party etc. Chapter 2 contains "Right to Information and Obligations of Public Authorities". Chapter 3 "The Central Information Commission" deals with the constitution of the central information commission, while Chapter 4 "State Information Commission" describes the constitution of state information commission, its term of office and condition of service. Chapter 5 "Power and Functions of Information Commission, Appeal and Penalties" is about the powers and functions of the information commission, process of appeals and penalties while Chapter 6 "Miscellaneous" has all miscellaneous things. Schedule 1 contains the oath to be taken by the various levels of Information Commissioners. Schedule 2 contains a list of intelligence and security organization established by the Central Government [5 (p. 1027-1056)].

TERMS DEFINED UNDER THE RTI ACT

Some of the important terms explained in the RTI Act are as follows:

"information" means any material in any form, including records, documents, memos, e-mails, opinions, advices, press releases, circulars, orders, logbooks, contracts, reports, papers, 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 in force.

"Public authority" means any authority or body or institution of self-government established or constituted—

- a) By or under the constitution;
- b) By any other law made by the Parliament;
- c) By any other law made by the State legislature;
- d) By notification issued or order made by the appropriate Government and includes any:
 - I. Body owned, controlled or substantially financed;
 - II. Non Government Organization substantially financed, directly or indirectly by funds provided by the appropriate Government;

"Right to information" means the right to information accessible under this Act which is held by right under the control of any public authority and includes the right to –

- a. Inspection of work, documents, records;
- b. Taking notes, extracts or certified copies of documents or records;
- c. Taking certified samples of material;
- d. Obtaining information in the form of diskettes, floppies, tapes, video cassettes or in any other electronic mode or through printouts where such information is stored in a computer or in any other device [5 (p.1028-1030)].

INFORMATION WHICH CAN'T BE DISCLOSED UNDER THE RTI ACT

RTI is the right of any citizen of India to request access to information and the corresponding duty of government to meet the request. But some information which can't be disclosed is listed below:

1. Information which could affect the sovereignty, integrity, security, strategic, scientific or economic interests of the country, or relations with foreign State.
2. Information which could lead to incitement of an offence.
3. Information, the disclosure of which may constitute contempt of court.
4. Information, the disclosure of which would cause a breach of privilege of Parliament or State Legislature.
5. Information regarding commercial confidence, trade secrets, intellectual property rights, etc.
6. Information, the disclosure of which would endanger the life or safety of any person.
7. Information which would impede investigation or apprehension or prosecution of offenders.
8. Information available to a person in his fiduciary relationship.
9. Cabinet papers generated during the process of making a decision cannot be disclosed until the decision has been taken.
10. Personal information which would cause unwarranted invasion of the privacy of the individual unless the PIO is satisfied of the larger public interest. However, any information which cannot be denied to Parliament or State Legislature shall not be denied to you (CHRI, 2013).

EXEMPTED OFFICES UNDER RTI ACT

Under section 8/9 of Right to Information Act, some government organizations are exempted.

These include:

- 1) Intelligence Bureau (IB), Research
- 2) Research and Analysis Wing of the Cabinet Secretariat
- 3) Directorate of Revenue Intelligence
- 4) Central Economic Intelligence Bureau
- 5) The Directorate of Enforcement
- 6) Narcotics Control Bureau
- 7) Aviation Research Centre
- 8) Special Frontier Force (SFF)
- 9) Border Security Force (BSF)
- 10) Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF)
- 11) Indo-Tibetan Border Police
- 12) Central Industrial Security Force (CISF)
- 13) National Security Guard (NSG)
- 14) Assam Rifles
- 15) Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB)
- 16) Directorate General of Income-tax (Investigation)
- 17) National Technical Research Organization
- 18) Financial Intelligence Unit, India
- 19) Special Protection Group
- 20) Defense Research and Development Organization
- 21) Border Road Development Board
- 22) National Security Council Secretariat [5 (p.1056)]

These organizations are however required to provide information under the Act if the panel believes the appellant's query relates to a case of corruption or abuse of human rights.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF RTI ACT

The Right to Information Act in India is one of the recent information legislation in the world. In India, this Act can be used by any common person while in other countries like USA and UK, the Right to Information is just an intellectual right, exercised by academicians and social scientist. This implies that under RTI Act any one can access information while in other countries only academicians and social scientists those are considered to be

intellectual can access the information. This Act was passed by Parliament on 15th June 2005 and came fully into force on 12th October 2005. The Act is based on the principle that all government information is the property of people. Due to this, democracy has taken to grass root level and it is a step for ensuring the participation of 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 Act has increased transparency and greater accountability in the functioning of the government and hence played a significant role in exposing and reducing corruption to some extent. This Act has disclosed different scams like Pratibha Patil Land Controversy, the ongoing 2G scam, the Adarsh Housing Society, etc. It is claimed to promote a "citizen-centric approach to development" and to increase the efficiency of public welfare schemes run by the government.

In 1766, Sweden became the first country in the world to implement the Right to Information. The 'Freedom of Press Act' gave the right to access public documents and presently this country has the highest per capita income in the world. During the 1940s, the whole world recognized it as an important need but for a long time, a majority of countries did not show much interest in this regard. In 1951, Finland came up with the law related to the allocation of public nature of government documents which gives freedom of information to each individual. America came

up with the Freedom of Information Act in 1966 while in Canada an 'Access to Information Act' was enforced in 1982. In France, a law ensuring the access of official documents to the common man was brought about in 1978. The 'Freedom of Information Act', Australia and 'Official Information Act', New Zealand were enforced in 1982. [6 (p.76)]

THE RTI MOVEMENT IN INDIA

In India for the introduction of National Right to Information Act, there have been efforts since 1996 onwards. The National Campaign for People's Right to Information (NCPRI) was founded in 1996. Its founding members included social activists, journalists, lawyers, professionals, retired civil servants and academics, and one of its primary objectives was to campaign for a national law facilitating the exercise of the fundamental right to information. The international organizations like Common Wealth Human Rights (CHRI) Initiative strongly advocates that the Right to Information (RTI) is fundamental to the realization of rights as well as effective democracy, which requires informed participation by all. CHRI educates the public about the value of RTI and advocates at policy level for guaranteed access to information. The contribution of Common Wealth Human Rights initiative for the enactment of the national Right to Information Act in India was through providing aid to discussions, analysis of the Freedom of Information of Act and recommendations to the National Advisory Council (NAC), to all the Cabinet Ministers and members of the Parliament. In response to the pressure from the grassroots movements, national and international organizations, the Press Council of India under the guidance of its Chairman Justice P.B. Sawant drafted a model bill that was later updated at a workshop organized by National Institute of Rural Development and sent to Government of India,

which was one of the reference papers for the first draft bill prepared by Government of India. For some political and other reasons the bill could not be taken up by the Parliament. Meanwhile, the NCPRI was also campaigning for state RTI acts and supporting the efforts of state government, like Karnataka, Delhi and Rajasthan. Again, in 1997, the United Front Government appointed the working group under the chairmanship of Mr. H.D. Shourie, which drafted a law called “The Freedom of Information Bill-1997”. This bill was also not enacted. In 1998, though the Prime Minister Mr. Atal Bihari Vajpayee announced that a law on Right to Information should be enacted soon, it did not materialize. In the year, 2000 the Freedom of Information Bill-2000 was tabled before the Parliament. After some debate it was referred to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Home Affairs for review. The Freedom of Information Bill was passed by the Parliament as the Freedom of Information Act 2002. However, it could not enter into force as the necessary notification was never issued by the then government. In August 2004, the NCPRI forwarded to the National Advisory Council (NAC) a set of suggested amendments to the Freedom of Information Act 2002. The NAC comprises distinguished professionals drawn from diverse fields of development activity who serve in their individual capacities. The task of the National Advisory Council is to provide inputs in the formulation of policy by the Government and to provide support to the Government in its legislative business. These amendments, designed to strengthen and make the 2002 Act more effective, were based on extensive discussions with civil society groups working on transparency and other related issues and were in response to the undertaking given by the United Progressive Alliance (UPA). The coalition Government at the Centre led by UPA formulated an agenda called, “Common Minimum Program”. One of the agenda of the

CMP was the introduction of “Right to Information Act.” The CMP stated clearly that the Right to Information Act will be made more progressive, participatory and meaningful. In order to look after the implementation of the Common Minimum Program, the UPA constituted National Advisory Council. In the National Advisory Council, some of the activists like Aruna Roy, and Jean Drez who are associated with the National Campaign for Peoples’ Right to Information Act consistently put pressure on the UPA Government to pass the bill and to enact a law. In response to these efforts, the Parliament passed the bill and the President of India Dr. A. P. J. Abdul Kalam consented to the Act on 15th June 2005 and finally this Act came into effect all over India, from 13th October 2005 [10].

Under this Act citizen can obtain copies of permissible governmental documents, inspect permissible documents or Government works and obtain samples. This Act is applicable to all constitutional authorities, including the executive, legislature and judiciary; any institution or body established or constituted by an act of Parliament or a State Legislature. It is also defined in the Act that bodies or authorities established or constituted by order of notification of appropriate government including bodies “owned, controlled or substantially financed” by Government, or non-government organizations (NGOs) like Pradan, Goonj etc, “substantially financed, directly or indirectly by funds” provided by the government are also covered in it.

PROCESS OF FILING RTI APPLICATION

The process of filing RTI is very simple and it can be done by a lay man also who is capable of writing an application. Application may be given in writing or through electronic means. It can be in English or Hindi or in the official language of the area. It has to be submitted with prescribed fee to Public Information

Officer (PIO), specifying the particulars of the information sought. Reasons for seeking the information are not required to be mentioned in the application. PIOs are appointed in each department/ agency to receive requests and provide information. At sub-district level, there are Assistant PIOs who receive application/ complaints. Information has to be provided within 30 days, however information concerning the life or liberty of a person has to be given within 48 hours. Where request is given to Asst. PIOs, information has to be given within 35 days and in case where third party is involved, it has to be given within 40 days. Information related to human rights violation has to be given within 45 days from exempted list like security and intelligence agencies. If PIO fails to provide information within 30 days then information seekers need not pay any fee for photocopy or print of the required documents.

Every PIO is liable for a fine of Rs. 250 per day and it can be up to maximum up to Rs. 25000 in these cases:

1. Not accepting an application;
2. Delaying information release without reasonable cause;
3. Malafidely denying information;
4. Knowingly giving incomplete, incorrect, misleading information;
5. Destroying information that has been requested, and
6. Obstructing furnishing of information in any manner.

IMPLEMENTATION & IMPACT OF RTI ACT 2005

The Information Commission (IC) at the Centre and the State levels has the power to impose this penalty. The Information Commission can also recommend disciplinary action for violation of the law against PIO. The Act establishes a two-tier mechanism for appeal. The first appeal is to be made to an officer

within the organization who is senior in rank to PIO. The second appeal is to be made to the Central Information Commission or State Information Commission [9 (p.5-6)].

The basic objective of the RTI Act according to its preamble is to establish a practical regime for all citizens to access information held by public authorities, which in turn increases transparency and accountability of the public authorities. Reasons for seeking information are not required to be given [6 (p.17)]. The application fee of RTI for central government is 10 rupees although it differs from state to state. In Jharkhand also the application fee for RTI is 10 rupees. Fee can be paid in cash, DD, bankers' cheque or through postal order. People below poverty line do not have to pay any fees for seeking information [6 (p.137-138)]. Now more than eight years have passed since the enactment of the RTI Act and it is necessary to take feedback of what has been achieved by giving access to information held by public authorities to the citizens. Linking to this, it is equally important to know the responses and awareness about RTI Act among people of Ranchi; whether they know the power of RTI and its proper use or not.

RTI Act is a very friendly legislation for people. Thousands have benefited from it. But it is true that more than eight years after Parliament passed the Act in June 2005, the road to accessing the information remains arduous. RTI had been used as a tool to get their ration cards, passports, pension funds, birth certificates, Income tax refunds etc. throughout the country but still Jharkhand is lagging behind. In the state of Jharkhand, 8 social auditors were killed when they wanted to know about NREGA implementation (www.simc-wire.com).

The topic has been chosen for the research because this Act helps common people to get detailed information from government offices

and in keeping things very transparent for everyone. At the same time, this Act has made the government servants more accountable as well as responsible. Although this RTI Act came into force in 2005, but still very few people are aware about this Act; and those who are aware, they also hardly file the RTI especially in a state like Jharkhand. It has been found that even educated people are not fully aware about this Act and its actual use, that's why, there is very less transparency in the public organization at such places, and this results in corruption at high places, while in the other states, this Act has disclosed different scams and has contributed a lot to their development. RTI has revealed plenty of scams across the country, including several that attracted huge attention in the mainstream media. A few, of which most of us are aware are: the Pratibha Patil Land Controversy, the ongoing 2G scam, the Adarsh Housing Society, etc. Apart from these major scams, RTI has also revealed lesser known abuses of public trust like huge kerosene scam which revealed the case of misconduct in Maghmela - a festival celebrated by the people of Orissa. Every year, plenty gather together at Chandrabhaga beach near Sun Temple at Konark to pray. Given the insufficient lighting in that area, the pilgrims who come for the festival were long supplied with kerosene by the Department of Food Supplies and Consumer Welfare through the sub-collector, Puri. Years after electrification in that area, the government continues to supply kerosene and wasting lakhs of rupees from the state exchequer for a purpose which is no longer necessary. RTI queries by a local activist revealed that this kerosene, instead of being supplied to the devotees, was misappropriated. On inspection of the distribution register, it was found that the signatures and thumb impressions were all fake (www.simc-wire.com). Then in 'Adarsh' scam, India's corrupt bureaucracy came to the forefront revealing a few shocking facts. Then-Chief

Minister of Maharashtra Ashok Chavan resigned when his name cropped up in this controversy along with a few other politicians and bureaucrats. Government land, reserved for housing supporting war widows, was acquired for use building posh apartments priced below market value that violated most building regulations. It was only when Simpreet Singh, a citizen journalist, filed an application under the Right to Information Act that this scam was exposed, creating a stir amongst the politicians and the citizens of India (www.simc-wire.com).

It is eight years since the RTI was passed; the performance on the implementation front is far from perfect. Consequently, the impact on the attitude, mindset and behavior patterns of the public authorities and the people is not as it was expected to be. Most of the people are still not aware of their newly acquired power. Among those who are aware, a major chunk either does not know how to use it or lacks the guts and gumption to invoke the RTI. A little more stimulation by the Government, NGOs and other enlightened and empowered citizens can increase the benefits of this Act manifold. RTI will help not only in mitigating corruption in public life but also in alleviating poverty - the two monstrous maladies of India. Due to this the, researcher decided to study the awareness about Right to Information among educated people. Now some of the people of Jharkhand also have started filing RTI in different offices but still they are very few and for overall transparency the number of applicants should be more.

AIMS & OBJECTIVES

AIMS

The purpose of this study is to find out the awareness level of educated people about RTI and determine the lacking points and the loopholes in the implementation of the Act.

This study is also aimed at ascertaining what steps can be taken by the government as well as by media to make them aware about the Act.

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this study are to:

- Find out the awareness level of people about RTI Act and its basic use;
- Find out the awareness level of people about process of filing RTI and its further steps;
- Find out how many respondents have filed RTI, how many times and in which offices; and
- Examine whether they have been filed for personal issues or on behalf of their society also.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study will bring to light the fact that people of Ranchi are not aware about their right which can make the government officers more accountable and government offices more transparent. This study will help the government to know about the implementation of RTI Act and if the government will find that the implementation was not done properly then they can change their strategy. This study can also be helpful for the academic purposes to increase awareness among students of their basic right to seek information from all public authorities.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

TOWARDS EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION OF RIGHT TO INFORMATION ACT

A research conducted by G. P. Sahu and Prabhudatt Dwivedi. G P Sahu is working as Assistant Professor at the School of Management Studies, M N National Institute of Technology, Allahabad. Prabhudatt Dwivedi is a

faculty in the School of Management at Krishna Institute of Engineering and Technology, Ghaziabad. This research paper investigates the problems (if any) faced by the organizations due to the implementation of RTI Act, 2005 and the possible solutions.

The organizations with high use of information technology are not facing difficulties whereas the organizations with medium or low use of information technology are facing difficulties due to the implementation of RTI Act, 2005. Information technology is a significant tool for the effective implementation of Right to Information Act, 2005.

Through the personal interview of the PIO of different organizations, it was found that the PIO of those organizations where medium or low level of information technology is used, are finding a lot of difficulties in gathering the information. To get the required information, they approach different departments. However those organizations where all the information is stored at a central place called Central Database Management System (CDMS), are not facing difficulties due to the implementation of RTI Act, 2005. Therefore, the integration of different departments through information technology was suggested by the PIO. Further it was also suggested by the PIO that there should be fully dedicated executives working as PIOs and not as the executives with additional responsibility.

PIO is unable to provide the required information to the information seeker on time because they find it difficult to access the required information from the concerned department. It was found in through the personal interview that in the organization where low or medium level of IT is used, PIO approaches the different departments to get the information and then it is given to the information seeker. It is a time taking process. The organization where high level of IT is used,

all the information is at Central Database Management System (CDMS), which can be accessed by the different departments as well as the PIO.

PAPER SUBMITTED ON RIGHT TO INFORMATION ACT 2005-AN OVERVIEW

This paper was submitted by Anushree Adhau, a student of LL.M. NALSAR, Hyderabad. This Act is designed to facilitate and further its end i.e., empowerment of public to know what is going on under the guise of administration and should not be treated as an enactment providing penalties and punishments. Without any hesitation it can be said that this Act should be the voice of the so called voiceless in our society. Lastly, it should be reminded to everybody that one should not be crazy about rights only and should also be mindful about one's duties. Rights and duties are the two sides of a coin.

In recent years, there has been an almost unstoppable global trend towards recognition of the right to information by countries, intergovernmental organizations, civil society and the people. The right to information has been recognized as a fundamental human right, which upholds the inherent dignity of all human beings. Moreover, the Right to Information Act is for the smooth functioning of the government by maintaining transparency between the government working and the public who are the beneficiaries. In a nutshell, it can be said that this piece of legislation is unique in many aspects. It entitles the citizen to know the details of governance subject to certain limitations. It will further reduce the gap between the rulers and ruled.

RIGHT TO INFORMATION MOVEMENT IN INDIA

A paper was presented by Dr. E. Venkatesu, Asst. Professor of Centre for Panchayati Raj of

National Institute of Rural Development, Hyderabad. This paper was presented in national seminar on 'Human Rights in the era of Globalization' held on 3rd & 4th November 2006 in the department of Political Science, University of Hyderabad. In this paper, different aspects of RTI Act are covered. It mainly talks about the formation of this Act, demands and movement for RTI Act and its provision in the constitution.

It also discusses the efforts of Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sangathan (MKSS) towards Right to Information Act in detail. This paper also explains about some of the state government who introduced the Right to Information Act such as Goa (1997), Tamil Nadu (1997), Rajasthan (2000), Karnataka (2000), Delhi (2001), Assam (2002), Maharashtra (2003), Madhya Pradesh (2003) and Jammu & Kashmir (2003). Among all these Acts, Maharashtra RTI Act was considered as the model in promoting transparency, accountability and responsiveness in all the institutes of the state as well the private organizations, which were getting financial support from the government. Tamil Nadu RTI Act was considered as the most innovative one in how to refuse the information to the seekers. It also talks about the implications of the Right to Information Act 2005 and emerging scenario in the post to this Act.

IMPLEMENTATION OF RTI ACT, 2005 IN THE STATE PROGRESS, KEY ISSUES & CONSTRAINTS

A study report was prepared by Dr. Jaya S. Anand. He is a Professor of Institute of Management in Government (IMG). This study was done in the year 2008. This study was designed to know the implementations of RTI Act and obstacles faced during its implementation. It also focused on the fact that how much the state has progressed after adopting the RTI Act 2005, what are the key

issues related to its implementation and what are the barriers in its proper functioning.

The objectives of this study was to undertake a survey in order to find the progress, issues and constraints in the implementation of the Act; to assess the extent of awareness of RTI among citizens belonging to different strata of the society; to collect the perception of all the stakeholders on the scope, utility and limitations of the Act in terms of timely availability of information, in combating corruption, change in approach, attitude and responsiveness of officials towards citizen; and to suggest measures for efficient and effective implementation of the Act. The methodology for this study was survey. In this research, both quantitative and qualitative data were used. Appropriate tools like focus group discussion and interview schedules were extensively used for the survey for getting the response of the citizens. One district was selected and 151 samples were chosen randomly belonging to different socio-economic background. All samples were interviewed on the same topic and finally data was collected based on these interviews. Although this research was categorized for different group and results differ for each group, but the general findings of this research were quite shocking. Even citizens belonging to the higher strata of the society are not fully aware of the potential of the RTI Act. Though many people had read about the Act in newspapers and magazines, but they had not used it. T.V. channels also do not broadcast programs on this Act and fail to publicize properly.

Apart from these research papers, some of the books have also been reviewed for this study. One of the books is *Law of the Press* written by Dr. Durga Das Basu. This book contains all the laws related to press but it has also given a special chapter on Right to Information Act 2005. In this chapter, all the legal aspects of the Act are mentioned. For this research, a number

of chapters, their name and schedules have been reviewed. The list of exempted departments/agencies from RTI Act and the original definition of some of the terms like document, information, public authority have been also reviewed from this book.

The second book reviewed for this study was *Right to Information- A Step by Step Guide Book* written by Nandini Sahai and Vishnu Rajgadia. Although this book contains a lot of information, but for this study basically world history of RTI has been reviewed. The movement for RTI Act, the process of filing RTI, and application fee for RTI have also been reviewed for this study.

METHODOLOGY

This research is based on survey. A set of questionnaire was prepared and it was filled by different groups of educated people. Samples of this study are college students, teachers and advocates. Questions were mainly related to their knowledge about RTI and their experience. Most of the questions were directly related to this study which will help in determining the objective. This research is completely quantitative in nature. Quantitative research is applicable to the phenomenon that can be expressed in terms of quantity and which is generally based on the measurement of quantity or amount.

This research follows the non-probability techniques in which a sample is selected without any regard to the laws of probability. It means no such specific formulas are used to select the sample. If non-probability sampling generalization is not possible, it means the particular statement or result cannot be applied for whole mass.

For this research, 60 educated people of Ranchi were surveyed. These 60 people were from different sections of the society but the

common thing was their educational qualification. The minimum qualification of these people was intermediate. They were given a set of questionnaire and they filled it according to their convenience. The collected data was distributed among various tables and then percentages were drawn with help of mathematical formulae. The data collected from the survey has been represented below through figures. Since this research is quantitative in nature that's why most of the data are shown as percentages.

DESIGN

Survey method was used to conduct this study. A survey was conducted among the educated people who are selected as universe for this study. In survey, a set of questionnaire was prepared and it was given to the selected samples. Questionnaire is attached in the annexure. The questionnaire consisted of both close ended and open ended questions. In close ended questions, the respondents were supposed to answer either in yes or no, or in some cases there were multiple choices available for the respondents.

In open ended questions, the respondents were required to give the description of the particular question. Using all these techniques, data was collected and later on it was analyzed by using mathematical formulae.

This study is designed to know the awareness of educated people about RTI Act. Here the awareness means the basic information, its use and the process of filing RTI. It means who so ever knows about these things will be considered as aware about this Act. While selecting the sample, these criteria were adopted.

The general definition of educated is anyone who is trend or skilled in school, college or university. For this study, an individual who has

completed at least Matriculation was considered as educated. All though RTI is given to every individual but uneducated people are not very much familiar to it, that's why this research has targeted educated people.

UNIVERSE

Universe for this study were two colleges of Ranchi i.e. XISS and St. Xavier, Zila School, Marvadi School and Civil Court of Ranchi. Students, teacher and advocates were included in this study.

SAMPLE

Samples for this study were students of XISS and St. Xavier College Ranchi, Government school teachers of Zila School and Marwadi School. Apart from these, advocates of Civil Court Ranchi were also a part of this study.

The sample size for the survey was 60 and it was divided in three groups. In the first group, consisted 40 students were selected to fill the questionnaires. These students were of XISS and St. Xavier College Ranchi. These 40 students were further divided in two sub groups i.e. 20 boys and 20 girls. The second group consisted of 10 teachers. In this group, 10 randomly selected teachers filled the questionnaire and these teachers were from Zila School and Marwadi School Ranchi. Third and final group which consisted of 10 advocates of Ranchi Civil Court filled the questionnaire.

SAMPLING

Convenience sampling method was employed for the research which is a type of non-probability sampling technique. In convenience sampling, samples are selected according to the convenience of the researcher. Since this study has different objectives, the convenience sampling method helped a lot to conduct this study in an organized manner.

INSTRUMENT

Questionnaire is the instrument for this study. The questions which were asked during the survey are enclosed in the annexure. All the questions were inter related to each other, and in case someone answered no, then automatically rest of the questions were not applicable for that individual and it was marked N/A. There were some questions which were neutral in nature and when they were asked from the respondents, their answer was either

in positive or negative. Some of the questions were answered in yes or no, but most of the question's responses were descriptive in nature.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The collected data was distributed among various tables. Various mathematical formulae have been used to analyze the data which is shown below as figures. Interpretation of each figure has been given along with it.

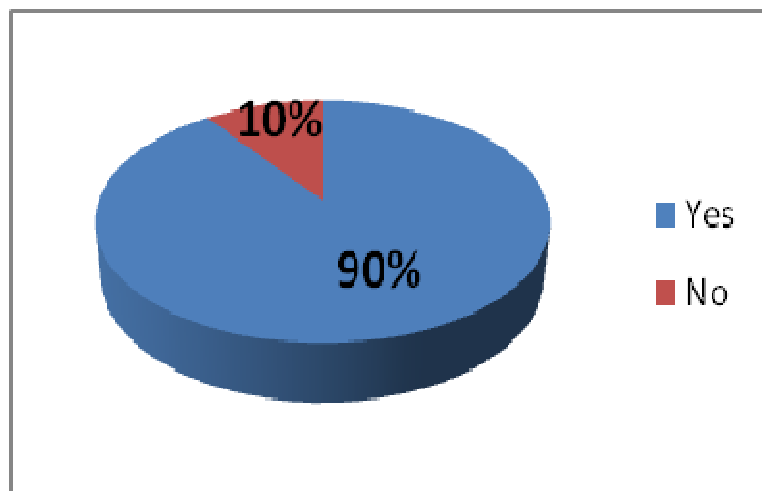


Figure 1. Data regarding the People who have Heard about the RTI Act

Figure 1 indicates that 90% of the educated people of Ranchi have heard about the Right to Information Act but there are 10% of the educated population who have not even heard

about the RTI Act. It means majority of the educated people have heard about Right to Information Act.

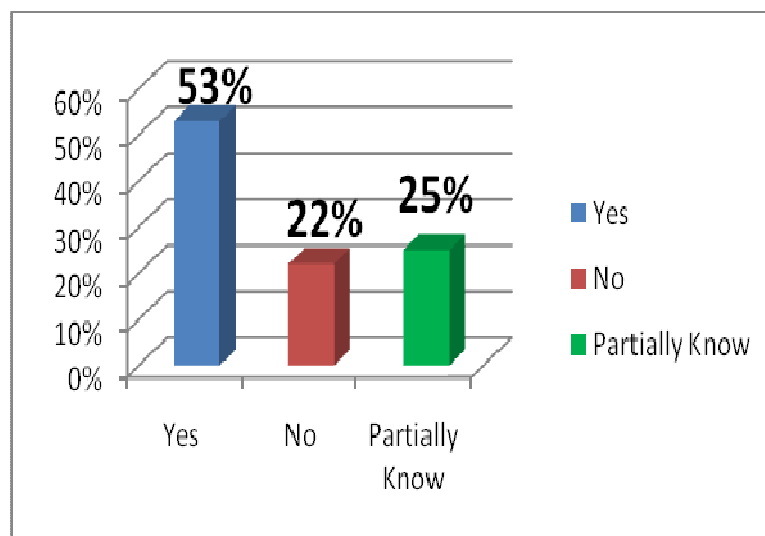


Figure 2. Data regarding the People who Know the Use of RTI Act

It is revealed from Fig. 2 that 53% of the educated people of Ranchi know the use of the Right to Information Act, while 22% of the people don't know the use of RTI Act. However

25% of the population is partially aware about the use of RTI Act. It means half of the educated people know the use of Right to Information Act.

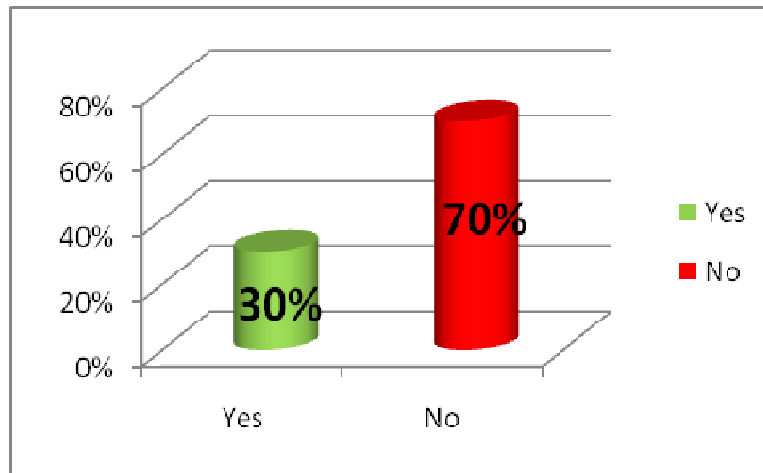


Figure 3(a).Data regarding the People who Know the Process of Filing RTI Application

Figure 3(a) indicates that out of the total sample, only 30% respondents know the process of filing RTI application, whereas 70% respondents are not aware of the process of

filing RTI application. However, the figures vary a lot when respondents are surveyed separately.

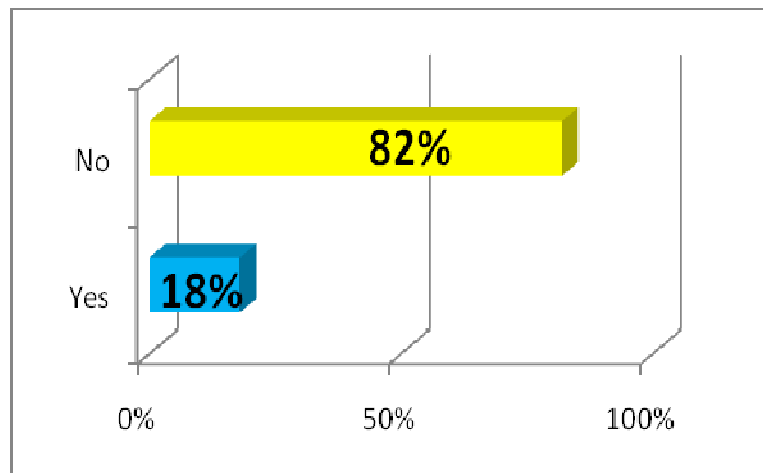


Figure 3(b).Data regarding the General People who Know the Process of Filing RTI Application

Figure 3(b) indicates that only 18% of the educated people know the process of filing RTI application. 82% educated people of Ranchi

don't know the process of filing RTI application. It means majority of the educated people don't know the process of filing RTI application.

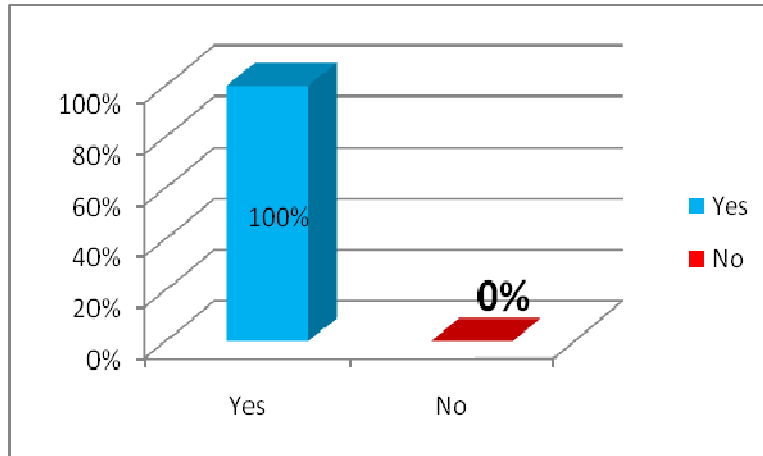


Figure 3(c).Data regarding the Advocates who Know the Process of Filing RTI Application

Figure 3(c) indicates that 100% advocates know the process of filing RTI application. For this study, 10 sample of advocates were taken. The

findings reveal that all the advocates know the process of filing RTI application and most of them have filed RTI many times.

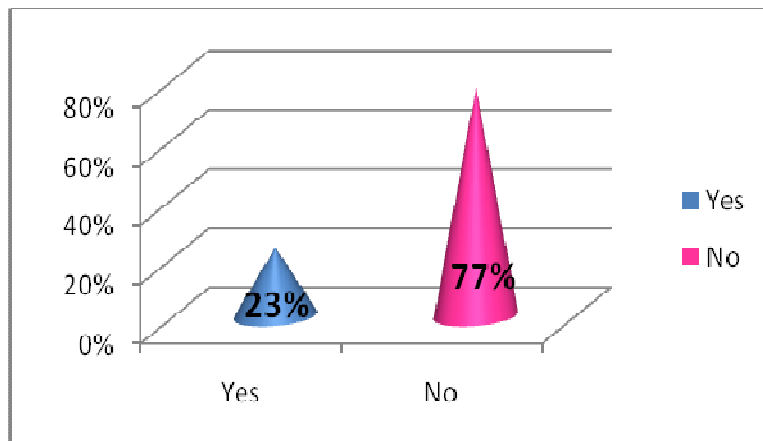


Figure 4.Data regarding the People who are Aware about Prohibited Offices for RTI Act

Figure 4 indicates that only 23% educated people of Ranchi are aware about the prohibited offices for RTI Act. A large number of people i.e. 77% of the respondents are not aware about the prohibited offices under RTI

Act, and even those 23% who are aware hardly know the exact prohibited offices under RTI Act. Most of them know that only defense offices are prohibited.

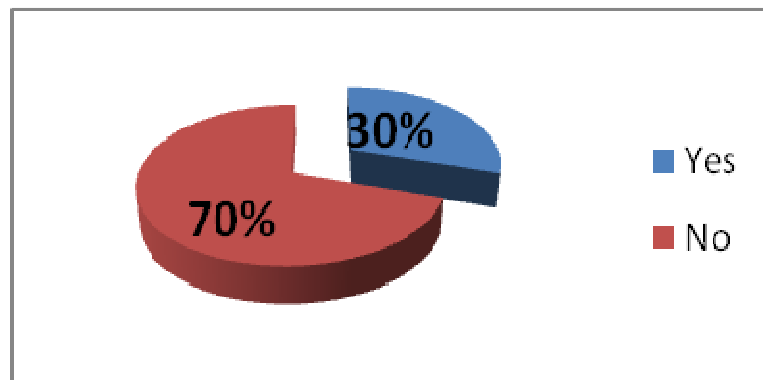


Figure 5.Data regarding the People who are Aware of the fact that No Reason is required for Seeking Information under RTI Act

Figure 5 indicates that only 30% educated people of Ranchi are aware that they are not required to mention any reason to seek

information under RTI Act, and 70% of the educated people of Ranchi are not aware of it.

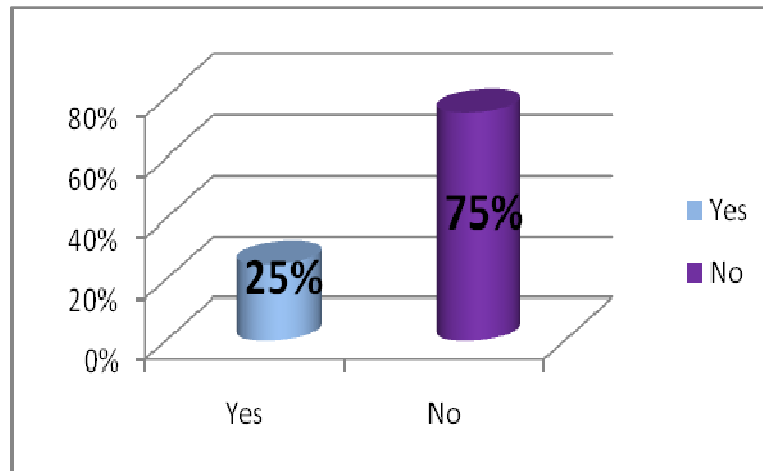


Figure 6. Data regarding the Awareness for further Process of Filing RTI Application

Figure 6 indicates that only 25% educated people of Ranchi are aware about the further process of filing RTI application. On the other hand, 75% of the educated people of Ranchi

are not aware about the further process of filing RTI application if they couldn't receive information in the first appeal.

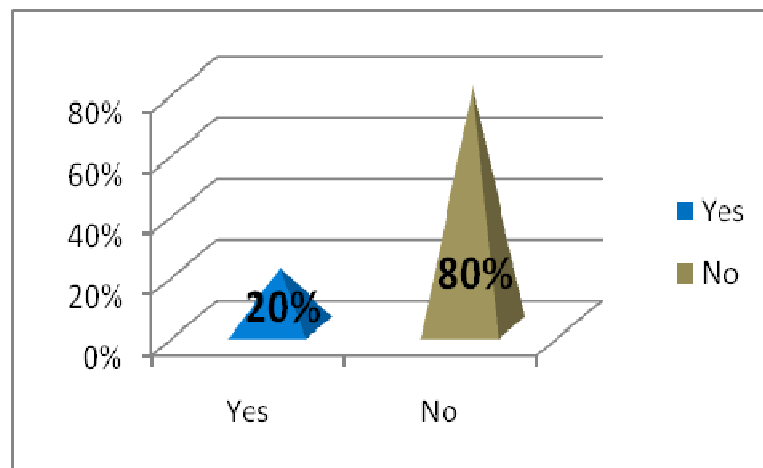


Figure 7. Data regarding People who have Filed RTI Application

Figure 7 indicates that only 20% educated people of Ranchi have filed RTI application, while 80% educated people of Ranchi have never filed any RTI application. Basically these 80% people are those who don't know the process of filing RTI application. Though 30% of people know the process of filing RTI

application as per Fig. 3 shown above, it means 10% respondents know the process of filing RTI application but they have never filed any RTI application. This data varies a lot when we look at it separately for general people and advocate. This variation can be seen in the Figs. 7(a) and 7(b).

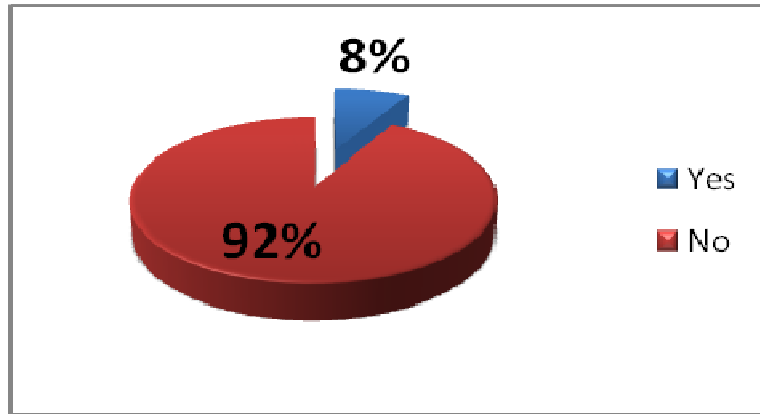


Figure 7(a).Data regarding the General People who have Filed RTI Application

Figure 7(a) indicates that only 8% educated people of Ranchi have filed RTI application, while 92% educated people of Ranchi have never filed any RTI application. All these people are well qualified in terms of education because they have completed at least intermediate, and especially in this research maximum respondents were graduates. This huge percentage i.e. 92% really shows that till now

people are not using the tool which was given to them to bring transparency in the system. Although it was not in the objectives of the research to study the difference of awareness level among males and females, still samples were taken of both the genders, and the result was quite shocking because all four respondents who filed RTI application were females.

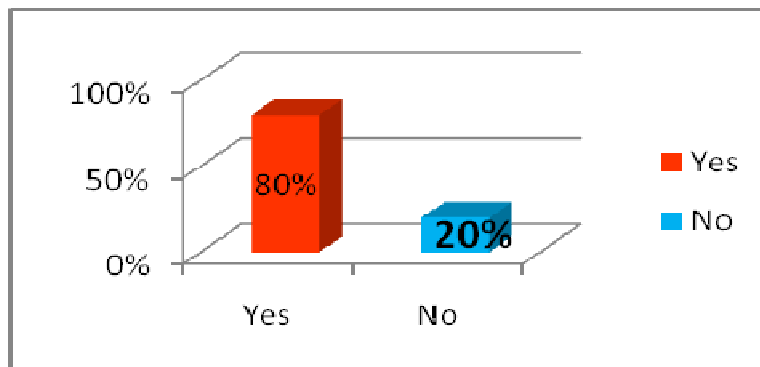


Figure 7(b).Data regarding the Advocates who have Filed RTI Application

Figure 7(b) indicates that 80% advocates of Ranchi Civil High Court had filed RTI application, while only 20% advocates of Ranchi Civil High

Court have never filed any RTI application. This data shows that majority of advocates are frequently filing RTI applications.

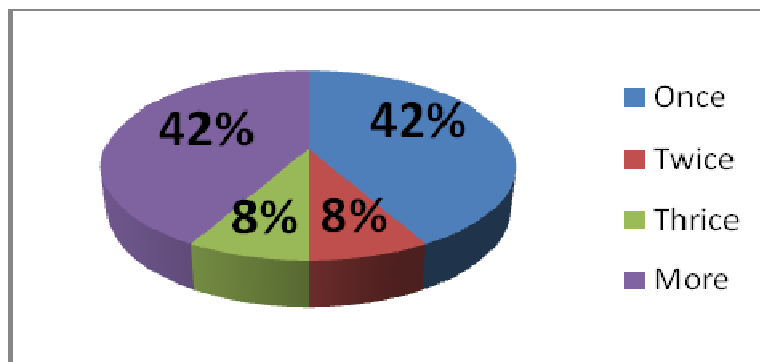


Figure 7(c).Data regarding How many times People have Filed RTI Application

Figure 7(c) indicates that 42% educated people of Ranchi have filed RTI application once, 8% had filed it twice, 8% thrice and 42% educated people of Ranchi have filed RTI applications for

more than five times. Since only 12 people have filed RTI application ever among 60 selected samples from this study, that’s why the data are shown from only 12 samples.

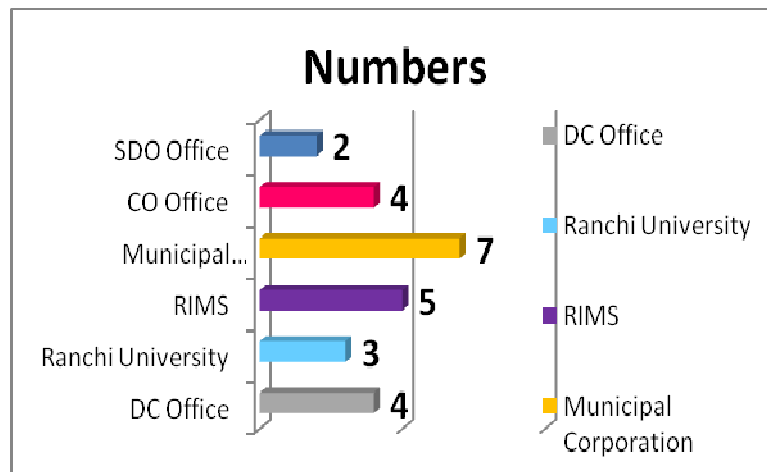


Figure 7(d).Data regarding the Offices where People mostly File RTI Application

In Fig. 7(d) data is not given in percentage because it was not possible due to various reasons, like one person had filed the RTI application in all the offices. In this figure, some of the offices are listed where people of Ranchi generally file RTI. In the survey it was found that people of Ranchi mainly file RTI

applications in Ranchi Municipal Corporation, RIMS hospital, Ranchi University, DC office, CO office and SDO office. People are mainly filing RTI application in case of corruption, irregularities and dissatisfaction with their service.

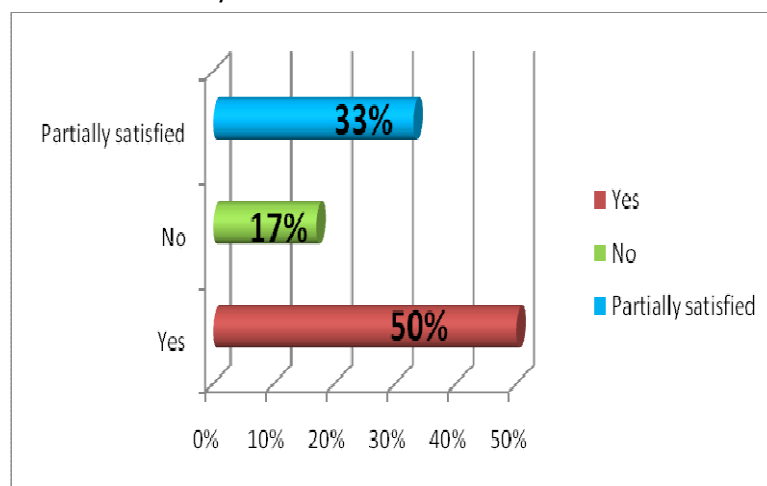


Figure 7(e).Data regarding the Satisfaction Level of People after Receiving Information

Figure 7(e) indicates that 50% people who had ever filed RTI application are satisfied with the answers provided to them, while 17% people are not satisfied with the answers provided to

them and 33% people are partially satisfied with the information received from public authorities.

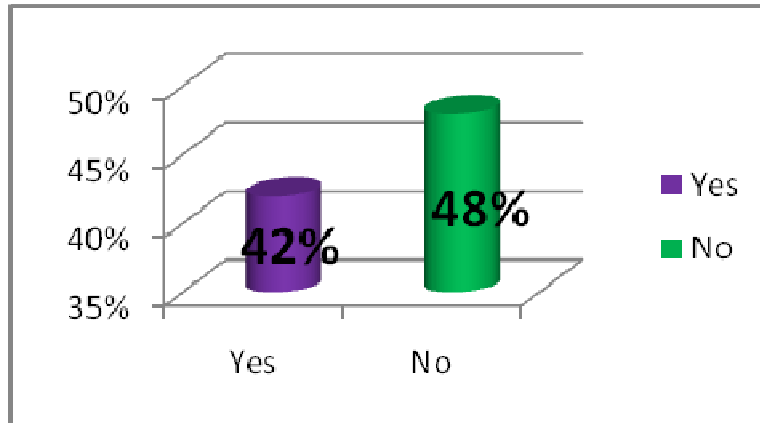


Figure 7(f).Data regarding the Filed Application for Issues (Personal/Social)

Figure 7(f) indicates that 42% educated people of Ranchi have filed RTI applications for their personal issues, while 48% educated people have filed RTI application for social issues. The data shows that majority of people are using this right for social work instead of personal

concerns. In personal issues, people are generally filing RTI application for their scholarships, exam and their job etc. In social issues, people are generally filing RTI related to corruption, irregularities, and poor service provided in government offices etc.

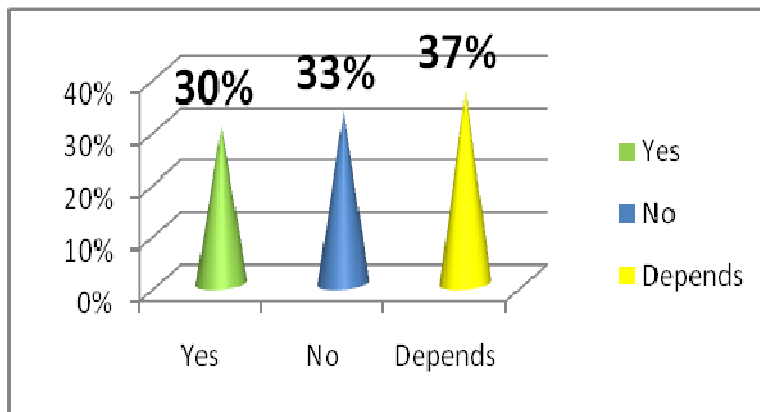


Figure 8.Data regarding the People's Willingness to File RTI Application

Figure 8 indicates that 30% educated people of Ranchi are willing to file RTI application in near future, while 33% people are not willing to file RTI application in near future. At the same time, 22% educated people attribute it to the given situation. It means if they feel the need of

filing RTI application they will definitely file it. It can be analyzed from this data that approximately 67% people are willing to file RTI application, which means change is about to come but government needs to make the people aware about this act.

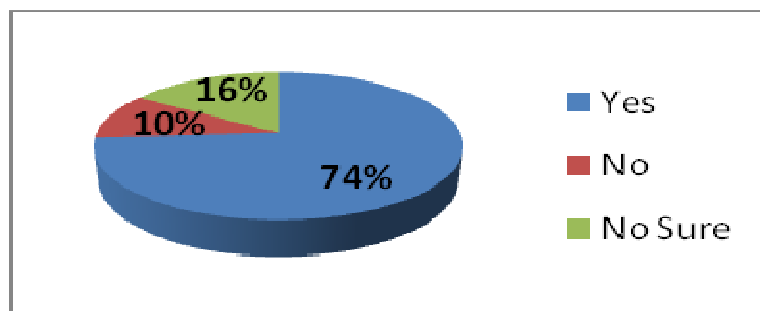


Figure 9.Data regarding the RTI Usefulness in India

Figure 9 indicates that 74% educated people of Ranchi felt that RTI Act is useful in India, while 10% people think that RTI Act is not useful in a country like India. There are 16% people who

are not sure whether RTI Act is useful in India or not. After analyzing this data, it can be said that majority of people believe that this act can be helpful in bringing transparency in India.

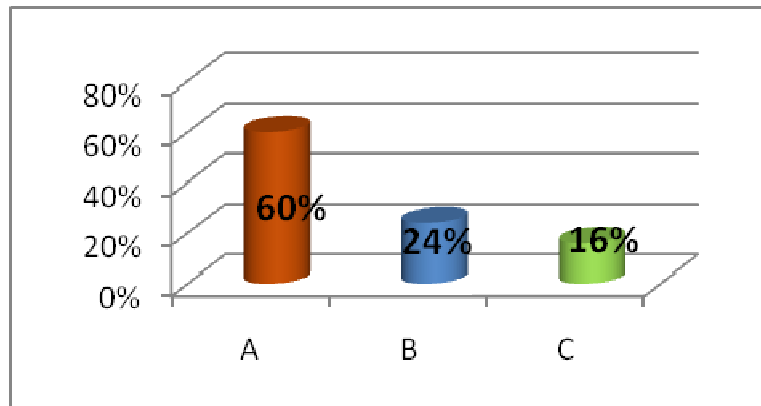


Figure 10. Data regarding the Obstacles for Effective Implementation of RTI Act

Figure 10 is divided in three sections i.e. A, B and C. During the survey, people identified generally three obstacles with different names according to their competency. For the analysis of data in this research, it was coded in three sections A, B and C. According to people, lack of awareness about this act is a major obstacle in implementation of RTI Act, so it was coded as A. Negligent approach of government was another obstacle identified by people, so it was coded B. Finally corruption was identified as

the third obstacle for the implementation of RTI Act, so it was coded C.

It is revealed from Fig. 10 that 60% educated people of Ranchi felt that lack of awareness is a major obstacle in implementation of RTI Act, 24% people felt that negligent approach of government is a major obstacle in implementation of RTI Act, and 16% educated people felt that corruption is a major obstacle in implementation of RTI act.

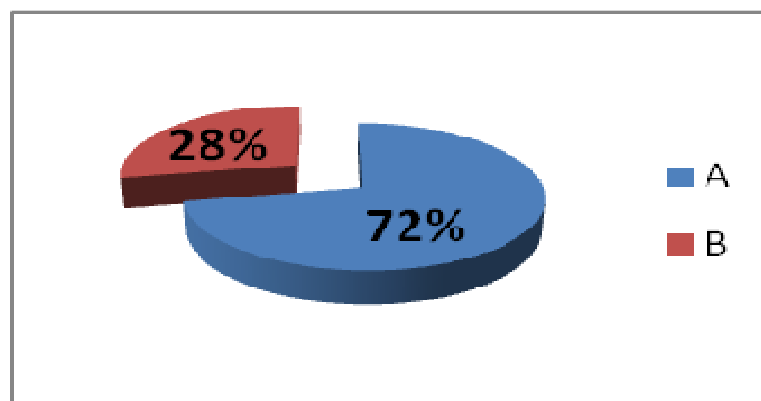


Figure 11. Data regarding the Suggestions given for Effective Implementation of RTI Act

In Fig. 11, there are two sections i.e. A and B. During the survey, half of the respondents were not willing to give any suggestions, but some respondents were eager to give suggestions. Most of the respondents (72%) suggested that RTI Act should be added in school syllabus,

which was coded as A. Some of the respondents (28%) suggested that the government should organize an awareness campaign with the help of non-governmental organization to promote this act, so it was coded B.

FINDINGS & CONCLUSION

FINDINGS

The findings are as follows:

1. 90% educated people have heard about Right to Information Act and 10% people are still there who have not heard about it. If we look at the data then it is visible that only 53.50% educated people of Ranchi know the use of Right to Information Act, while 21.50% of people don't know the use of RTI Act. However 25% of the population is partially aware about the use of RTI Act. It means, in general, half of the population is still not aware about the use of RTI Act.
2. A majority of educated people of Ranchi i.e. 70% are not aware about the process of filing RTI application, while 75% people don't know the further process of filing RTI application.
3. 20% educated people of Ranchi have filed RTI application, while 80% educated people of Ranchi have never filed any RTI application. Among those who have filed RTI application, 42% people have filed it once, 8% had filed twice, 8% thrice and 42% educated people of Ranchi have filed RTI applications for more than five times.
4. There is a significant difference among the common people and advocates regarding the awareness about Right to Information Act. Result shows that 80% of advocates have filed RTI applications while only 8% of common people have filed RTI applications.
5. The result shows that 42% educated people of Ranchi have filed RTI applications for their personal issues, while 48% educated people have filed RTI applications for social issues.

CONCLUSION

The results revealed that educated people of Ranchi are not aware about their rights. They

don't know what the Right to Information Act is all about and for what purpose it can be used. They don't know the power of participatory governance by using RTI Act. However with the advent of RTI Act, citizens have found a tool for bringing transparency and accountability in all levels of government. The RTI Act has a much higher impact on the quality of life of the poor and marginalized section of the society. Apart from this, the power of the Act is still to be realized by the citizens. Government, media and social organizations need to do a lot to attain the intended objective of the RTI Act. They need to address various issues and constants in accessing the information under the Act. Until the introduction of the Right to Information Act, information was the property of those people who are in the ruling side and secrecy was maintained. With the commencement of the Act, now the people have got right to take, see, check and inspect any information. But people are aware enough to use this Act and it requires a lot of awareness campaign among the people in order to utilize the act to combat the corruption and get the services of the State, otherwise the Right to Information Act 2005 will also become just like any other act.

From the findings it is clear that among most of the educated people of Ranchi whether they are in intermediate, graduate or masters level, the awareness about RTI is low. While 18% of educated people have awareness about RTI Act, the awareness of 82% of them is below average level or non-existent. Therefore for total awareness of Ranchi population, it is necessary to organize awareness campaigns with the help of educational institutions, self-help groups and NGOs. Due to this, each citizen would become aware about the RTI Act which is an essential step for bringing transparency and participatory governance in our country. It is equally important to bring awareness about RTI among male, female, youngsters, educated, and

uneducated through awareness campaigns. There should be special awareness programs for educated people to create and enhance awareness about RTI Act among them because they can help others who are not educated. The RTI should be included in school and college curriculum for proper understanding to bring transparency and participatory governance. Survey conducted for this research also shows that 72% people think that RTI Act should be added into the school and college syllabus for the betterment of our nation, and 18% people think that government should organize awareness campaign for making the people aware regarding this Act.

However, as per the survey, it was revealed that only 30% of the respondents know the use of RTI Act, and only 8% respondents who are common people have ever filed RTI application. During the awareness survey, it was also observed that the major sources of this awareness were word of mouth and newspapers. The government has not undertaken any substantial steps to promote the RTI Act. The result of survey also reveals that around 50% of information seekers are dissatisfied with the quality of information being provided to them.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Some of the recommendations regarding the steps that can be taken by the government for the effective implementation of RTI Act are as follows:

- Mass awareness campaign should be conducted both at Central and state levels.
- The main objective of campaign should be to increase public awareness, encourage citizen involvement and increase transparency within the government.
- All public authorities and training institutions should be directed to incorporate training module on RTI in all

training programs.

- The Government should develop and organize educational programs to advance the understanding of the public, especially of educated people, regarding how to exercise the rights contemplated under the Act.
- RTI Act should be added in school syllabus.
- As UGC has made environmental science as a compulsory paper in college and university level to keep the environment clean, similarly RTI Act should be made compulsory in college and university to keep the system clear and transparent.
- Government should also take the help of non-governmental organizations for organizing awareness campaigns.
- There should be special training given to PIOs of the government offices.
- Media should give importance as well as space to news related to RTI Act.

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