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## Citizens awareness about RTI ACT: a Study of Panchkula City of Haryana

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### Abstract (12pt)

Access to information not only promotes transparency, accountability, Responsiveness and openness, in administration, but it also encourage the effective participation of people in democratic governance development. In this path the RTI Act 2005 is a landmark in the democratic system of India as it has tried to put together a new institutional system for ensuring accountability and transparency in the functioning of Public Private Institutions. The root of the RTI Act is to create an information privilege government in which information can be accessed by any citizen within the provisions of the Act. For this every individual and every young citizen must know about the proper use of RTI Act. This study aimed to assess the awareness among citizens about Right to Information Act in Panchkula city of Haryana. The data has been collected from 100 citizens (including male and female) from Panchkula city. The results revealed that the citizens are aware about RTI and they are less concerned with its proper use.

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### Keywords:

Citizen;  
Awareness;  
Right to Information Act (RTI);  
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## 1.1 INTRODUCTION

Right to information play very important role in day to day life of citizens. It is a fundamental right of every citizen. The full form of RTI stands for “Right to Information”. Earlier in our country leak of Information in India was restricted by the Official Secrets Act 1923 and also different other unusual laws. With the Right to information Act 2005 everything will be easy for every citizen of India It was passed by the Parliament of India on 15th June 2005 and came fully into force on 12 October 2005. The Article 19 of the constitution deal with the Freedom of speech and expression: Information is necessary to form and express opinions, dispute or maintain on any subject. It is thus a part of Article 19 (1) (a)Article 21-Right to life and liberty: Information is necessary for protection of the right to life and liberty. It is therefore a part of Article 21.<sup>i</sup>

The right to information is finally guaranteed by the Constitution. However, with a vision to put away a useful command for securing information, the Indian Parliament enacted the Right to Information Act, 2005 and thus gave a powerful tool to the citizens to obtain information from the administration as a subject of right. This law is extremely broad and covers about all matters of governance and authority and has the widest possible reach, being applicable to Government at all levels- Union, State and Local as well as recipients of government grants.<sup>ii</sup>

**Figure 1.1 RTI is Key of Information**





### **1.1.1 Salient Features of the RTI Act 2005**

These are some salient features of the RTI Act 2005

- RTI is meant for the right of every citizen of India to apply for right to use to information and the equivalent responsibility of Government to meet the demand apart from the exempted information.
- The Act is based on the principle that democratic system requires an informed citizenry transparency and simplicity of information. The Act contains six chapters and two schedules. <sup>iii</sup>
- The Right to Information is a well-formulated Act.
- Chapter I is entitled 'preliminary' and explains the various terms like appropriate government, public authority, information, record, third party etc.
- Chapter II contains obligations of public authorities.
- Chapter III deals with the Central Information Commission while
- Chapter IV describes about the State Information Commissions.
- Chapter V deals with the powers and functions of the Information Commissions, appeals and penalties and
- Chapter VI has all the miscellaneous things.
- Schedule I contains the oath to be taken by various levels of Information Commissioners.
- Schedule II contains a list of intelligence and security organizations established by the Central Government. <sup>iv</sup>

### **1.2 RTI IN HARYANA**

In Haryana State the RTI was also implementing on 2005. The No. 5/4/2002 – Indian Administrative Reform (1AR) in put into effect of the powers conferred by sub-section (I) read with sub section (2) of section 27 of the Right to Information Act, 2005 (Central Act 22 of 2005), the Governor of Haryana hereby makes the following rules providing for information under the said Act, namely: -

#### **1.2.1 Short title and origination.**

- The rule of this act was called the Haryana Right to Information Rules, 2005.



- The rule of this act was come into force on the date of their publication in the official Gazette.

### **1.2.2 Definitions in the RTI Act 2005**

There are some definitions related to this Act. These are as follows-

- (a) The meaning of the “Act” is the Right to Information Act, 2005 (Central Act 22 of 2005).
- (b) The word “Commission” means the Haryana Information Commission.
- (c) The meaning of the “Form” is a form, appended to these rules.
- (d) The word “Section” means the section of the Act.

### **1.2.3 Application for obtaining information.**

- A individual, who requirements to attain any information permissible under the Act, shall formulate an application in Form A to the State Public Information Officer/State Assistant Public Information Officer along with a fee
- The receipt of the application of RTI is given by the State Public Information Officer/State Assistant Public Information Officer

### **1.2.4 Deposit of fee**

- The fee of the RTI shall be deposited with the State Public Information Officer/ State Assistant Public Information Officer
- The amount of fee shall be credited to the receipt head/account number of the concerned public authority.
- The State Public Information Officer/State Assistant Public Information Officer shall scrutinize the application and shall evaluate how much fee is mandatory to be paid by the applicant for obtaining the information on receiving of an application.<sup>v</sup>



**Table No 1.1 Statistics of Haryana**

Sr. No.	Particulars	Percentage
1.	Area	44,212 sqk.m
	Division	6
	District	22
	Sub Division	58
	Tehsil	80
	Sub-Tehsil	50
	Blocks	125
	Towns	154
	Villages	6,841
2.	Population	253.51 lakh
	Males	134.95 lakh
	Females	118.56 lakh
3.	Density	573 per sqk.m
4.	Literacy Rate	75.6%
	Males	84.1%
	Female	65.9%

Source: Statistical Abstract of Haryana 2011<sup>vi</sup>

### 1.2.5 Haryana Right to Information Rules 2009 Amended 2016

In 2016 the Haryana Government was amended RTI rules from 18-03-2016 and revised the rules of RTI. These are as under-

- The Rules of 2005 was replaced by 2009 (21/12/2009)
- These rules was valuable from 01/01/2010
- This rule was also again amended on 18/03/2016.
- The filing fee reduced to Rs.10/-, CD Rs. 50
- inspection first hour free and thereafter Rs.5/- per hour or part thereof beyond first hour
- The new amendment provides a format for application



- The application fee Rs 10/- should be paid only by demand draft of Indian Postal order. These fees should be in favour of Account Officer
- The address of State Information commission, Haryana, SCO No 70-71, sector 8C Chandigarh. <sup>vii</sup>

**Table No 1.2 RTI Acts 2005: Time table of RTI**

Sr. No	Particulars	Time table/ time limit for disposing of applications
1	In Normal course supply of Information	30 days
2	If it is concerns the life of liberty of a person supply of information	40 days
3	If the application is received through Assistant Public Information Officer	05 days shall be added to the time period
4	Supply of information if application/ request is received after transfer from another public authority: a) in normal case b) in case of the information concerns the liberty of a person	Within 30 days of the received of the applications Within 48 hours of the received of the applications
5	Supply of information by organizations a) Specified in the second Scheduled b) If information is related to the allegations of the violation human rights c) If information is related to the allegations of corruption	45 days from the received of the applications Within 30 days of the received of the applications

**1.3 OBJECTIVE OF STUDY**

The main objective of the study is

- **To examine the awareness among the citizens of Panchkula District of Haryana regarding the RTI Act, 2005.**
- **To study the usage of RTI by the citizen of Panchkula District.**



### 1.4 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Both primary and secondary data was used for collected the data. For the purpose of primary data interview scheduled was prepared and was tested on sample of 100 citizens. An attempt has been made by the researchers to assess the level of awareness among the citizens of Panchkula district of Haryana regarding RTI Act, 2005.

**Table 1.3 which year the RTI Act was notified?**

Sr. No	Which year the RTI Act was notified	Percentage
1.	2002	04
2.	2003	11
3.	2005	72
4.	2015	12

The above table represent the viewpoint of the citizen of Panchkula city regarding the year RTI act was notified. Majority of the Respondents were aware that in 2005 RTI Act was notified

**Table 1.4 Right to Information means**

Sr. No	Right to Information means	Percentage
1.	Obtaining Floppies tapes	08
2.	Inspection of Work	36
3.	Taking notes/ Certified samples	56
4.	All of the above	00

The above table represents the general opinion on the meaning of the Right to Information. It was found that 56 percent of citizens responded that right to information means taking notes, extracts or certified copies of documents or records. On the other hand 36 percent respondents were said that it is inspection of work (whether it is Public or Private)



**Table No 1.5 General Questions Related to the Awareness about RTI Act**

Sr. No	Statements	Yes	No	Can't say
1.	Have you ever heard of RTI Act?	92	08	-
2.	Have you ever tried to seek information from government organization or department?	56	40	04
3.	Are you aware about that you can file your RTI application online?	83	10	07
4.	You are aware to whom the RTI applicant should be addressed to?	64	36	-
5.	You are aware where you have to submit the RTI application?	79	21	-

The above table represents the awareness of the citizens regarding the RTI Act. Majority of the i.e. 92 percent respondents were aware about the RTI Act of 2005. It was found that citizens of panchkula city was used the RTI to seek information from government organization or any government departments. Majority of the respondents were also aware about the RTI online applications and 83 percent of the respondents were file RTI online to seek information. Further majority of the respondents were aware about the whom the RTI addressed and where they submitted the RTI Application.

**Table 1.6 Sources of Information Regarding the Uses of RTI**

Sr. No	Sources of Information Regarding the Uses of RTI	Yes	No	Can't say
1.	Newspapers	82	18	-
2.	TV, FM Radio,	66	30	04
3.	Internet	57	40	03
4.	People	94	06	-





The above table represents the views of the peoples regarding the sources or information getting regarding the uses of RTI. Majority of the respondents were in favour of Newspapers, Radio and with the interacting with the other peoples.

**Table No 1.7 within how many days the information is to be supplied?**

Sr. No	Within how many days the information is to be supplied?	Yes
1.	15 Days	10
2.	30 Days	46
3.	45 Days	40
4.	60 Days	04

The above table represents the viewpoint of the respondents regarding within how many days the information is to be supplied. Majority of the respondents were in favour of that it will take 30 days and 45 days the information is to be supplied

**Table 1.8 RTI promote Good Governance**

Sr. No	RTI promote Good Governance	Percentage
1.	Yes	72
2.	No	26
3.	Can't say	02

The table No 1.8 represent the viewpoint of the citizen regarding the RTI promote the Good Governance in Government. And majority of the respondents i.e. 72 percent were said yes RTI upliftment and promote Good Governance in government Institutions. While on the other hand 26 percent of the respondents were in favour of no in this regard.

**1.4 FINDINGS OF THE STUDY**

- Majority of the respondents were aware about the RTI and they have heard of RTI Act.
- Majority of the respondents have never sought for any information from government organization or department.



- Majority of respondents/ citizens were aware about that the RTI application can be filed online.
- Majority of citizens/respondents were aware to whom the RTI application can be addressed.
- Majority of the respondents were aware where the RTI application has to be submitted.
- Majority of the respondents were come to know about through various sources like media, newspapers, and interaction with the other people (words of mouth)
- Majority of respondents/ citizens knew that RTI Act was notified in 2005.
- Meaning of the Right to information majority of the responded that RTI means inspection of work, documents and records to them.
- Majority of the respondents/ citizens responded that information under Act is to be supplied within 30 days.
- Majority of the respondents were in favour of that RTI is promoting the Good governance in the Administrative institutions and in organization.

### **1.5 SUGGESTIONS**

- In order to avail the facility to obtain information under RTI Act, there should be wide publication through media/newspapers of the rules of the RTI Act for the awareness of citizens about such Act. In every government department separate Wing needs to be established to make purposeful use of RTI Act by the citizen.
- Therefore in order to make RTI a real success there is need to bring in facilitation centers in every government department for making use of RTI, user manual should be made available in every government department and efforts should be made to advertise the RTI Act through available sources of media and there should be prominent display of act in all government offices in order to achieve the real meaning of “DEMOCRACY” and make government citizen centric.



## References

<sup>i</sup> <http://righttoinformation.gov.in/rti-act.pdf>

<sup>ii</sup> <http://researchjournals.in/documents/Sep2012/37.pdf>

<sup>iii</sup> <http://aptel.gov.in>

<sup>iv</sup> [http://www.cutsinternational.org/cart/pdf/Analysing the Right to Information Act in India.pdf](http://www.cutsinternational.org/cart/pdf/Analysing_the_Right_to_Information_Act_in_India.pdf)

<sup>v</sup> <http://csharyana.gov.in/WriteReadData/Rules/RTI%20Cell/2440.pdf>

<sup>vi</sup> Statically abstract of Haryana updated 2018-2019

<sup>vii</sup> <https://righttoinformation.wiki/rules/haryana/state#haryana-right-to-information-rules-2009-amended-2016>