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Role of Right to Information in Promotion of Good Governance

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ABSTRACT

Good governance is fundamentally a combined concept which includes transparent and accountable public institutions, strong; decisive and competent Government machinery, and the fundamental attitude of Public Servants to do the right things and people to claim their legitimate rights. The above things enable a Government to proceed on the right path and deliver facilities and services to the common people efficiently who pay taxes for them. Good governance depends upon the mutual interaction between stakeholders in Governance i.e. leaders, political parties, bureaucracy, parliament, judiciary, private sector, civil society, media, and common people and their interests. Transparency and accountability of Government machinery coupled with informed citizens not only reduce corruption but also act as Life Blood of Good Governance. The RTI Act, 2005 is a quantum leap forward for the realization of the overall good of the common Citizens at larger. Right to Information encompasses within itself the right to access information, right to participate in affairs of the Government and administration, accountability and transparency in formulation and implementation of public policies, predictability in actions of public servants, and responsiveness of Government machinery towards common people. Right to Information and Good Governance can be considered as two sides of one coin as RTI ensures participation of common people in Governance of State which in long run bring Good Governance by enhancing the quality of Governance. Thus, with this background, an attempt will be made in this paper to study the role of the RTI Act in the promotion of good governance and how far the same has been successful.

Keywords: RTI Act, 2005, Good Governance, Accountability, Transparency.

I. CONCEPT & ORIGIN OF THE RIGHT TO INFORMATION

Access to public records is an essential requirement for a modern government, especially in a democracy. Democracy expects openness and openness is a concomitant of a free society. The “openness is possible only when the ‘right to know’ is exercisable by the people. In a democratic set up the people are sovereign, they have the right to know what their

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representatives are doing. Hence, information is indispensable for the transparency and accountable functioning of a true democratic government. It provides an important guard against abuses, mismanagement, corruption and corrupt practices. It is also beneficial to the governments as openness and transparency in the decision-making process assist in developing citizen's trust in governmental actions and maintaining a civil and democratic society."²

More than 177 years ago, James Madison, the fourth President of the US said: "A popular government without popular information or the means of acquiring it is but a prologue to a farce or a tragedy, or perhaps both. Knowledge will forever govern ignorance; And a people who mean to be their own governors, must arm themselves with the power which knowledge gives."³ Martin says that "one must distinguish between four different though related notions: freedom of speech, freedom of the press, freedom of expression and freedom of information. It is essential to keep the four separate, even though they are often used interchangeably. Although they related to similar things, they are not identical."⁴

The terms 'right to information' and 'freedom of information' are often used interchangeably and have been regarded as a fundamental human right. In the very first session in 1946, the UN General Assembly adopted Resolution 59 (1) stating, "Freedom of information is a fundamental human right and.... the touch-stone of all the freedoms to which the United Nations is consecrated. Therefore, governments around the world are increasingly making available more information about their activities. Over fifty countries around the World have now adopted comprehensive Freedom of Information Acts or Right to Information Acts to facilitate access to records held by governmental bodies."⁵ Various factors such as international pressure, modernization, corruption and scandals, recognition of the Right to Information as a human right, etc. have been responsible for this wave.

II. MEANING & JURISTIC DIMENSION OF WORD 'RIGHT TO INFORMATION'

Etymologically, the term information is derived from "the Latin words 'Formation' and 'Forma' which means giving shape to something and forming a pattern, respectively. Being a matter related to speech and expression, 'information' is known as something which removes vagueness in ideas with added awareness"⁶. Rodney D Ryder defined, "right to information as

² Goel, Sumar L. *Right to information and good governance*. Deep and Deep Publications, 2007.

³ Matthews, Richard K. "James Madison's Political Theory: Hostage to Democratic Fortune." *The Review of Politics* 67, no. 1 (2005): 49-68.

⁴ King Jr, Martin Luther. "Letter from a Birmingham jail (1963)." *Martin Luther King Jr., Malcolm X, and the Civil Rights Struggle of the 1950s and 1960s: A Brief History with Documents* (1963).

⁵ Mendel, Toby. "Freedom of information as an internationally protected human right." *Comparative Media Law Journal* 1, no. 1 (2003): 39-70.

⁶ Bauer, Laurie, and Bauer Laurie. *English word-formation*. Cambridge university press, 1983.

to access to information”. According to him, “Access to information may be defined as the ability of the citizen to obtain information in the possession of the state.” He Says, “some states provide for access in their Constitution and Laws, many do not. Even where access is recognized, it is invariably subject to limitations. Access to information is often called, and rightly so, the ‘oxygen for a democratic society’⁷.

In a forward by the Director-General of UNESCO to the MacBride Report titled ‘Many voices, one world’, he states: “It is essential that all men and women in all social and cultural environments should be given the opportunity of going in process of collecting thinking thus initiated, for new ideas must be developed and more positive measures must be taken to shake off the prevailing interstice. With the coming of new world order, each people must be able to learn from the others, while at the same time conveying to them its own understanding of world affairs. Mankind will then have made a decisive step forward on the path to freedom, democracy, and fellowship.”⁸

According to Sarbjit Sharma and Krishan Gopal, “right to information is a tool for social welfare. They point out that this right is a potent tool for countering many of the social evils and for protecting the fundamental rights of the people. The right to information is also necessary for protecting civil liberties, for example by making it easier for civil society groups to monitor wrongdoing such as encounter killing or the abuse of preventive detention legislation.”⁹ The Right to Information Act, 2005 defines “Information’ as ‘Information’ means any material in any form, including records, documents, memos, e-mails, opinions, advice, press releases, circulars, orders, logbooks, contracts, reports papers, samples, models and data material held in any electronic form. It also includes information relating to any private body which can be accessed by a public authority under any other law for time being in force.”¹⁰

III. ROLE OF RTI ACT IN PROMOTION OF GOOD GOVERNANCE

“Where a society has chosen to accept democracy as its creedal faith, it is elementary that the citizens ought to know what their government is doing.” -Justice P N Bhagwati

Right to Information (RTI) is an index to measure the growth and development of a country. In India, till 2005, the citizens had no access to any information which was dealt with by a Public Authority. Matters affecting public interest were not easy for a common man to get

⁷ Rodney D. (2006) , “ Right to Information Law Policy and Practice ” , Wadhwa Publications , New Delhi

⁸ MacBride, Sean, and Elie Abel. *Many voices, one world: Communication and society, today and tomorrow: The MacBride report*. Unesco, 1984.

⁹ Sharma, Sarbjit, and Krishan Gopal. *Right to information: implementing information regime*. Authorspress, 2006.

¹⁰ §.2(f), The Right to Information Act, 2005

accessibility. Thus, without getting relevant information it was difficult for a citizen to participate in any social, political or economical debate concerning the issues or interest of the country. Some of the important features that make the act quite crucial for democracy are as follows:

1. Features that strengthened democracy: Below features strengthened democracy through active participation of citizens:
 - Every citizen has the right to claim information from public authorities under the act.
 - Public authorities have an obligation to provide the sought information to the applicants with certain restrictions related to national security, personal information, and third party information.
 - Fee has been prescribed for seeking information to check fraudulent applications. However, persons below the poverty line have been exempted from payment of fees.
2. Features leading to transparency:
 - A large amount of information has to be placed in the public domain byways of manuals prescribed under the Act.
 - All the Government departments along with a number of bodies that receive substantial funding from the Government have been brought under the RTI.
3. Features leading to accountability:
 - RTI Act provide for the setting up of Central Information Commission and State Information Commission. These Commissions act as the Second Appellate Authority and also exercise supervision and monitoring over the functioning of Public Information Officers.
 - Public authorities have to provide information as early as possible but not later than 30 days (not later than 48 hours in the matters pertaining to the life and liberty of an individual).
 - In case of delay, the Central Information Commission or the State Information Commission can impose a penalty. The Commission can also recommend disciplinary proceedings against the officials guilty of not providing information with mala-fide intention.
 - In case of denial or not providing proper information an appellate structure has also been provided. The first appeal lies with the First Appellate Authority nominated by

the Department while the second appeal lies with the Central Information Commission or State Information Commission.

Democracy requires “accountability, and transparency is a pre-requisite for such accountability . Good governance requires that “transparency be promoted through devolution of information, having an accountability mechanism for the public functionaries. The process of consultation with the participation of citizens in decision making would gradually become more pronounced in order to ensure more accountability.”¹¹ At the same time, the good citizenry would also need to be emphasized for the all-round development of the society. Besides enjoying their rights, the citizens would need to behave responsibly and perform their duties towards the state. Clearly defined ethical standards would also have to be instilled in contemporary society. In order to achieve all this, innovative use of information technology would be critical. Democracy, liberty, and the rule of law together represent the troika that is universally accepted now as the index of civil society. The protection of individual liberties follows the notion of democracy as a natural corollary. Three important features of democratic governance are:

- (i) “it functions in the interest of the people and not of a class or section of the people”.
- (ii) “it is susceptible to public opinion and respects civil and political liberties”.
- (iii) “it is subordinate to the control of ministers responsible to the legislature”.

Good governance implies, “utmost concern for people's welfare wherein the government and its bureaucracy follow policies and discharge their duties with a deep sense of commitment; respecting the rule of law in a manner which is transparent, ensuring human rights and dignity, probity and public accountability.”¹² Governance is not the exclusive preserve of the government. It extends to the other non-political branches such as civil society and the private sector which are performing public functions. Essentially, “it encompasses every institution, organization, from family to the state. It has many forms - visible as well as invisible, formal as well as informal, 'state centric' as well as 'citizen centric' and centralized as well as decentralized. World Bank defines governance as the manner in which power is exercised in the management of a country's economic and social resources.”¹³ Good governance entails effective participation in public policy-making, the prevalence of the rule of law, and an independent judiciary, besides a system of institutional checks and balances through horizontal

¹¹ Jain, Anshu. "Good governance and right to information: a perspective." *Journal of the Indian Law Institute* (2012): 506-519.

¹² Kulkarni, Ashwini. "Governance and the Right to Information in Maharashtra." *Economic and Political Weekly* (2008): 15-17.

¹³ Sharma, Aradhana. "State Transparency after the Neoliberal Turn: The Politics, Limits, and Paradoxes of India's Right to Information Law." *Verfassung und Recht in Übersee/Law and Politics in Africa, Asia and Latin America* 50, no. 4 (2017): 390-411.

and vertical separation of powers, and effective oversight agencies. Good governance is “fundamentally the combination of transparent and accountable institutions, strong and competence, and a fundamental willingness to do the right thing. These are the things that enable a government to deliver services to its people efficiently. Good governance thus depends on the interaction between stakeholders – leaders, political parties, bureaucracy, parliament, judiciary, private sector, civil society, media – and their interests; on capacity – human, technical, financial – of stakeholders to perform their role; and on incentives & accountability – rules & norms that provide incentives, rewards & sanctions to act in the public interest.¹⁴

Transparency, accountability, informed citizenry, and reduction in corruption being the critical elements of good governance, the Act looks forward to the realization of the greater good for the larger spectrum of citizens. “Right of access to information encompasses right to participation, accountability, and transparency and realization of the right hold the promise of promoting and strengthening citizen-led initiative for good governance. Access to information holds centrality in the realization of good governance helping to mount of citizen-led demand for transparency, accountability, predictability, responsiveness, and participation”¹⁵. In other words, it enhances the quality of citizen participation in governance from mere vote-casting to involvement in the decision-making that affects his/her life. The result of good governance is a development that “gives priority to the poor, advances the cause of women, sustains the environment, and creates needed opportunities for employment and other livelihoods”.

IV. DEFINITION & MODELS OF GOOD GOVERNANCE

UNDP defines good governance in terms of eight specific characteristics “i.e. participatory, consensus-oriented, accountable, transparent, responsive, effective and efficient, equitable and inclusive, and the rule of law where participation, transparency, legitimacy, and responsiveness form the pillars of good governance”.¹⁶ Nayef Al-Rodhan in his book “Sustainable History and the Dignity of Man: A Philosophy of History and Civilizational Triumph”¹⁷ proposed eight criteria for good governance in 2009. They are:

1. “Participation, equity and inclusiveness”

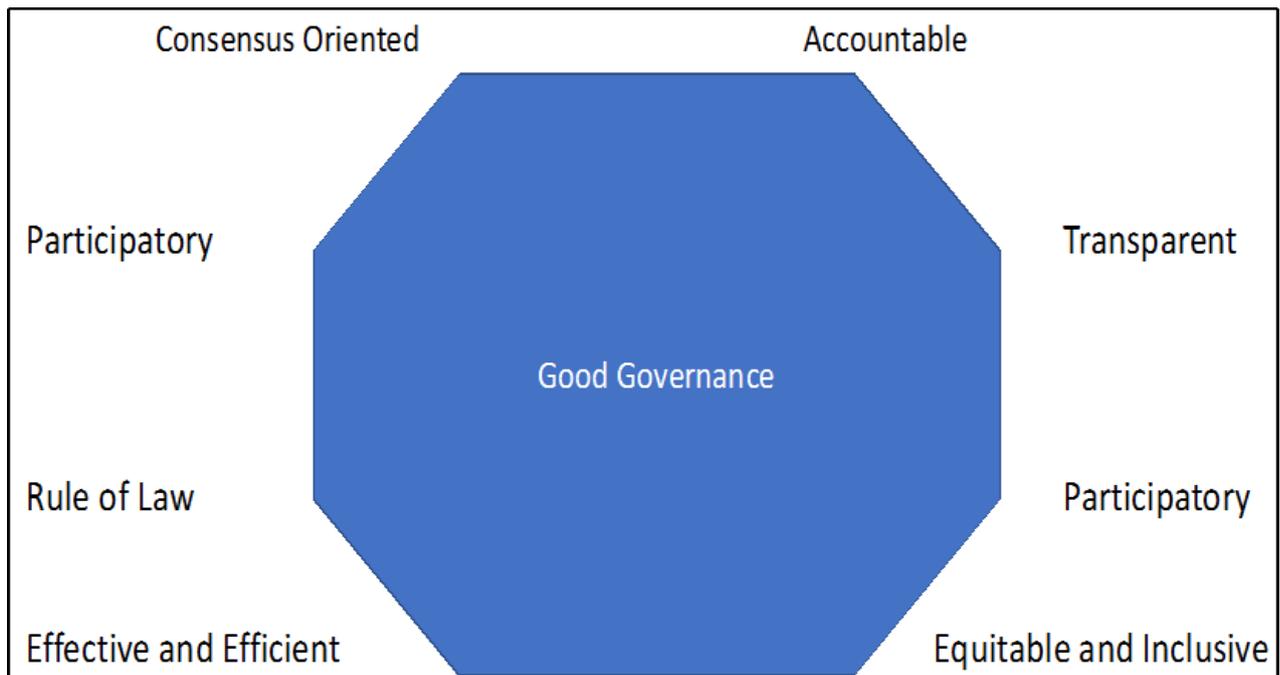
¹⁴ Chase, Robert S., and Anushay Anjum. "Initiatives Supporting Demand for Good Governance Across World Bank Group Sectors and Regions." (2008).

¹⁵ *Ibid*

¹⁶ Gisselquist, Rachel M. *Good governance as a concept, and why this matters for development policy*. No. 2012/30. WIDER Working Paper, 2012.

¹⁷ Al-Rodhan, Nayef. "Sustainable History and the Dignity of Man." *A Philosophy of History and Civilisational Triumph* (2009): 142-143.

2. “Rule of Law”
3. “Separation of Powers”
4. “Free, Independent and Responsible Media”.
5. “Government Legitimacy”
6. “Accountability”
7. “Transparency
8. Limiting the distorting effect of money in politics”.



In reality the Al Rodhan’s eight criteria for good governance is nothing but expression of fundamental values of liberal democracy and constitutionalism. To add to Eva Poluha and Mona Rosendahl in their book ‘Contesting good Governance’ expressed that “contest standards that are common to western democracy as measures of ‘goodness’ in Government. True, there is no single and exhaustive concept of 'Good Governance'. The term has ‘greater flexibility’”. As noted below the term encompasses;

- Access to knowledge is a powerful tool for citizens.
- Transparent and accountable process.
- Effective citizen participation.
- Respect for Women’s rights, child rights, and above all human rights.
- Constitutional regime and political pluralism.
- The rule of law.

- Public Sector, Private Sector, Non-profit Sector, and Corporate Sectors and Public - Private partnership.
- Consensual policies and legitimacy.
- Anti-corruption environment.
- Guaranteeing right to health, personal security, food security, having, and educational, social justice.

In India, “the concept of good governance was applied through the passing of RTI Act, 2005, 73rd and 74th constitutional amendment. Right to information is a basic requisite of good governance and the Act has played a major role in good governance as it has helped in making the system transparent and accountable”¹⁸. Democracy is all about people’s participation and empowerment. RTI Act has played a significant role in strengthening democracy by promoting the decentralization of power and good governance. RTI Act gave the common people a defining power to shape the government schemes and policies. “Governance was no more an arbitrary privilege of select few. RTI Act lent voice to the aspirations of ordinary citizens in issues of governance. The best way to deal with all these challenges while promoting good governance is by making the Act redundant. The governments, instead of waiting for the common people to seek information, must voluntarily make all the information available to the people. It will not only promote good governance but also increase the trust between government and the people it governs.”¹⁹

It empowered the people to question, audit, review, examine, and assess government acts and decisions to ensure that these are consistent with the principles of public interests, good governance, and justice. The greater the access of the citizen to the information, the greater would be the responsiveness of the government to community needs. Without information, the common man cannot adequately exercise his rights and responsibilities or make informed choices. So Right to Information is “the most effective instrument to check corruption where the citizen has the right to take the initiatives to seek information from the state and thereby promotes openness, transparency and accountability in administration by making the government more open to public scrutiny”. It also empowered, “the people to seek a definite and direct answer from the officials of their works or lack of it thus facilitating and encouraging the participation of common people in the process of good governance. RTI Act democratized the information and decentralized the power. Power no more remains confined to a select few,

¹⁸ Bhat, Rouf Ahmad. "Right To Information Act: A Tool For Good Governance." *Research on Humanities and Social Sciences* 5, no. 5 (2015): 185-189.

¹⁹ Rai, Sheila. "Transparency and Accountability in Governance and Right to Information in India." (2010).

rather it was made available equally to all the citizens. Good governance is characterised by transparency and accountability and the best way to ensure transparency and accountability in governance is through increased and informed participation.”

V. RTI ACT AS A TOOL OF EMPOWERMENT FOR COMMON PEOPLE

Under RTI Act, “citizens and citizen groups are empowered to approach the concerned department and check the planning and development permissions in detail as to whether they were given after giving due consideration to all factors or any undue compromise is made to favor some groups”²⁰. They are also empowered to approach the department to arrange an inspection of buildings or trade premises to find out whether the building activity or trade activity is in accordance with the permissions and conditions. They can make appeals to the authorities based on their actual monitoring of actual development and its deviation from sanctions. Citizen/ citizen groups can also seek information on environmental protection data from the public authority using the RTI Act. Citizens can invoke RTI Act and seek information on the maintenance of the sites and regulation of development around the structures/areas and even perform social audits to bring about any major differences between the allowed and actual development. The citizens and citizen groups “can make effective use of the RTI Act to ensure that the self-employment benefits reach the appropriate target groups laid down under the program and that they are effectively utilized for the employment generation of the unemployed. The RTI Act can be used as an effective tool in ensuring that the unemployed and under-employed have got livelihoods and acquire employment through improved skills. In the absence of employment generation, this can help people in requesting and demanding employment generation programs from the ULB.”²¹ The RTI Act can be used as an effective tool in ensuring that the incentives proposed for organized women groups are properly provided and the women groups are empowered and benefited socially and economically. So, undoubtedly RTI Act serves as a great tool of empowerment for the common people.

The Right to Information Act is considered to be the most revolutionary of all enactments in Independent India. The right to information and the assurance of widespread citizen participation in public affairs and active civil society is essential for the full realization of democracy. The RTI Act, which if used sensibly and efficiently can take the country in the direction of a new democracy and good governance. “If liberty and equality, as is thought by

²⁰ S. K. Borah, Right to Information Act: A Key to Good Governance, VOL -2, Issue- 2, International Journal of Humanities and Social Science, p.11 (2013).

²¹ Borah, Sri Keshabananda. "Right to Information Act: a key to good governance." *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science Invention* 2, no. 2 (2013): 11-22.

some are chiefly to be found in democracy, they will be best attained when all persons alike share in the government to the utmost”²². RTI is perceived as a key to strengthening participatory democracy and ushering in people-centered governance. “With access to information on their side, people can function better as an informed and responsible citizenry - investigating and scrutinizing government actions and reviewing the performance of their elected representatives with a view to seriously holding them accountable. People can access information on how officials are delivering on their commitments, how the bureaucracy is spending public money, and how representatives are interacting with special interest groups. Without good governance, no amount of developmental schemes can bring in improvement in the quality of life of the citizen.”²³ Good governance has four elements transparency, accountability, predictability, and participation and RTI helps in achieving the same.

The Act also requires the Government to compile a guide in an easily comprehensible form and to update it from time to time. The Government has already published four guides in the past, one each for the information seekers, the public authorities, the Central Public Information Officers, and the Appellate Authorities. This would help all the information seekers in getting information; public information officers in dealing with RTI applications; first appellate authorities in taking cogent decisions on appeals and public authorities in implementing various provisions of the Act effectively will help all stakeholders in furthering the objectives of the RTI Act, 2005.

The passing of the 73rd and 74th constitutional amendments has become a means for ensuring effective governance since the twin aim of decentralization i.e. deepening democracy and good governance can be achieved with the active participation of the people. “Open Government is the new democratic culture of an open society towards which every liberal democracy is moving and our country should be no exception. In a country like India which is committed to a socialistic pattern of society, right to know becomes a necessity for the poor, ignorant and illiterate masses.”²⁴ Whenever we talk about good governance, the basic and first things that strike in our minds are transparency, accountability, participation of the people, informed citizenry, etc, and these elements are the core value of any good governance. The objectives and purpose of the very RTI Act are to achieve these objectives, so in this way, it acts as a tool for good governance.

²² Singh, Dhanpal, and Viredra Kumar. "Role of RTI of Good Governance: An Study of RTI Act 2005."

²³ Ibid

²⁴ Gowda, N. Anada, and T. P. Kumar. "A study on good governance: an overview." *Asian Journal of Research in Social Sciences and Humanities* 3, no. 11 (2013): 82-92.

People are biggest stakeholder in governance; they have a critical and crucial role to play in promoting good governance in the country. Participation envisages the involvement of the entire society in governance. Both men and women are the cornerstones of good governance. Representative democracy does not mean the rule of chosen few; it must take into the interest of all sections especially the most vulnerable sections in the society. Without people's participation, the Right to Information will remain a non-starter. Participation has a wide range of definitions. On the one side, some researchers take participation to mean simply engaging with any particular activity; on the other side, researchers define participation as a process through which people influence and share control over development initiatives.

Right to Information Act creates "a connection between people and government. Good governance requires that civil society has the opportunity to participate during the formulation of development strategies and that directly affected communities and groups should be able to participate in the design and implementation of programs and projects. Even where projects have a secondary impact on particular localities or population groups, there should be a consultation process that takes their views into account"²⁵. Citizens who understand public affairs and what the government is doing can voice their opinion on issues that affect their lives and they can participate in the business of government. Right to information facilitates citizens in making political and economic choices and thus strengthens democracy. RTI Act facilitates and encourages the participation of common people in the process of promoting governance. Earlier people had the will, but did not have the way to take part in so-called 'official affairs'. But RTI Act paved the way for the active participation of the common people in promoting good governance.

People have showed increased interest in the affairs of government and sought information regarding various issues affecting their lives and well-being. RTI Act empowered the people to seek a definite and direct answer from the officials of their works or lack of it. RTI applications have annually increased by 8 to 10 times. A 2009 study estimates that in the Act's first three years alone, close to two million RTI requests were filed in different parts of the country. Thus, there is massive use of the right to know. Of the millions of applications for information, less than 5 percent have been denied information under various exemption categories. So, accountability has invariably led to efficiency and a sense of responsibility among government officials.

²⁵ Rajora, Varsha. "Tackling Corruption Through RTI: A Base for Good Governance." *Available at SSRN 1572238* (2010).

VI. ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY

Transparency is the corner stone of any good government. Public has right, to know about the policies and programs of the government. All communication of the government must be opened to the public. Access to information is a great enabler of transparency and transparency refers to the availability of information to the general public and clarity about the functioning of government institutions. The Right to Information Act is intended to promote accountability and transparency in government by making the process of government decision-making more open. "Though some departments of the Union government are exempted from this Act but the information can be sought if it is concerned with the violation of human rights. Even the information from the private authority can be sought only through the controlling authority and controlling authority will send the notice to the institution concerned under section 11 of the Act."²⁶ It has been realized by most of the countries through experience that greater access of the citizens to information enhances the openness of government to community needs. In turn, this facilitates immediate redressed of public grievances and thus improves the feeling of goodwill towards the government. Capitalists and democratic countries have a higher degree of openness vis-a-vis authoritarian regimes; nowhere in the world is government functioning totally open.

In India, the government passed a landmark Right to Information Act in 2005. Since then, social activists, civil society organizations, and ordinary citizens have effectively used the Act to tackle corruption and bring greater transparency and accountability to the government. We have had instances where numerous activists and groups have used this tool to good effect ensuring the values of transparency and accountability are upheld. RTI as a tool has been majorly used by organized citizen groups, activists, and NGOs. As far as its utilization by the individual citizen or the common man goes, the figures are far from satisfactory. Trends tell us that the use of RTI by the common man has been sparse and not up to the mark. This in itself is not the desired result as the RTI aims to empower the common man, irrespective of his/her association with citizen groups or NGOs.²⁷

VII. EFFECTS OF RTI ACT IN PROMOTING GOOD GOVERNANCE

RTI has a conspicuous impact on Indian society. Some of the major impacts of RTI are as follows:

²⁶ Singh, Rajbir. *Right to information and good governance*. Concept Publishing Company, 2010.

²⁷ Dalal, Rajbir Singh. "Attempts towards Good-Governance through Democratic Decentralization and RTI Act, 2005: An Evaluation." *Dynamics of Public Administration* 27, no. 1 (2010): 1-8.

1. First, is greater Transparency. As a matter of fact RTI exposes Government Rules, regulations and decision of public authorities. In reality this is a remarkable citizen administration interface.
2. Second, RTI provides information and empowers state holders. People are taking copies of documents, printouts, e-documents, and citizens are whiling those for social development.
3. Third, a corollary to first is RTI process a citizen-centric approach for inclusive growth and development. 'Secrecy' is now buried and 'Openness' rules. Essentially Government's decisions are now pro-citizen.
4. Fourth, Information and knowledge are appropriate and democratized. To be specific a large portion of rural and urban people are utilizing RTI tools for developmental purposes.
5. Fifthly, RTI reduces corruption. The fact is RTI forced people in Government organizations to be transparent and accountable. No doubt lack of transparency and accountability breeds corrupt practices.
6. Sixthly, Government is more and more accountable in business. Any deviation in current time attracts the headlines of media through RTI by the activists.

In the recent past, RTI activists pointed out "the irregularities in Sarva 72 Sikhya Abhiyan, Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme, Indira Awas Yojna, National Rural Health Mission, etc. Seventhly for promotion of Welfares Government is adopting Citizen Charter and Time Board Services Act."²⁸ This is nothing but Government is now a partner with the citizen at large for their development. Obviously, RTI is playing a major role in building Government Citizen Partnership. Live examples to this are as follows:

1. "In Ghara Katara village of Shankar Garh Block in Allahabad daily wages were not receiving their ration on cards. On December 19, 2006, some 21 villages prepared RTI applications questioning the administration. And the result was they got ration on the very next day."²⁹
2. Five people of Sidhakahna Jot Keshav village in Bahraich district of Uttar Pradesh filed RTI applications and questioned the district administration as to the condition of village roads drains, allotment of Indira Awas Yojna. And the impact of such RTI queries is administration immediately constructed roads, and drains, and allotted Indira Awas to 32 villages.

²⁸ Singh, Shalini, and Bhaskar Karn. "'Right to Information Act'—a tool for good governance through ICT." *Journal of Information, Communication and Ethics in Society* (2012).

²⁹ Kannan, Preeti. "Adopting the RTI Act as a mechanism to fight corruption to promote effective aid delivery in India." (2011).

3. In Chaibasa, the tribal village in Jharkhand there was a complaint against the postmaster for his irregularity in coming to office and for bribery.

VIII. CONCLUSION

As social activists, civil society organizations, and ordinary citizens have effectively used the Act, the law is increasingly being able to tackle high-profile corruption. With corruption being viewed as one of the biggest obstacles, an empirical study concluded that the RTI negatively impacted corruption and its statistical impact on curbing corruption was quite significant. “The study conducted in 20 states found that the Act has reduced the corruption in an average state by 18.5%. Findings of a national level survey jointly conducted by Transparency International and the Centre for Media Studies revealed that India’s economy in the last three years has grown at an unprecedented high rate of 8 – 9% per annum due to a decline in corruption and malpractices. Thus, it shows a strong and positive impact of RTI on transparency and accountability of the Government”³⁰

³⁰ Bhattacharyya, Sambit, and Raghendra Jha. "Economic growth, law, and corruption: Evidence from India." *Comparative Economic Studies* 55, no. 2 (2013): 287-313.