

## **Awareness among Teachers about Right to Information Act-2005 with Special Reference to Their Experience and Streams**

Dr. Pargat Singh Garcha

Asst. Prof. GHG Khalsa College of Education, Gurusar Sadhar. Email: [drpargat81@gmail.com](mailto:drpargat81@gmail.com)

---

### **Abstract**

This paper is an attempt to study influence of years of service (more than 5 years/ less than 5 years) and stream (arts/science), on awareness among teachers towards right to information act-2005. A descriptive research design of survey type was adopted for the study. This study was conducted on a sample of 70 teachers attending orientation and refresher course in UGC-HRDC, Shimla, Himachal Pradesh, from different states in India. Sample was classified on the basis of experience and stream. Self prepared questionnaire was used to assess the awareness of teachers towards RTI-Act. The study revealed that there is no significant mean difference found on the awareness towards RTI Act-2005 among teachers on the variable of experience but on the bases of stream mean difference was significant.

**Keywords:** RTI-Act, Experience, Stream, College and University Teachers

### **INTRODUCTION**

Transparency is the basic characteristic of a democratic country. All over the world every citizen of a democratic country desires to have the right to get information about his government's policies and procedures. 250 years ago, in 1776 Sweden passed the first freedom of information law- Swedish Freedom of Information Law (a literal translation of the native term indicates the Freedom of Printing Act). It is considered to be the oldest and the earliest legislative recognition of RTI. After this, a large number of countries like Finland in 1950, Denmark in 1950, Norway in 1970, France in 1978, Colombia in 1888, Canada in 1983 and United States of America in 1966, has enacted such laws in order to facilitate access to information. Along with United Nations General Assembly, many international documents, charters etc have considered RTI as a right that ought to be available to the people. In India, department of Personnel, decided to set-up a 'Working Group' (on the 'Right to Information and Promotion of Open and Transparent Government') in January 1997 under the chairmanship of Mr. H.D. Shouri, which submitted its comprehensive and detailed report and the draft bill on Freedom of Information in May 1997 (Rani,2010). The Government of India introduced the Freedom of Information Bill, 2000 in the Lok Sabha. Later on, UPA Government decided to repeal the FOI Act, and enacted a new legislation, the Right to Information Act, 2005 (RTIA) to provide an effective framework for effectuating the right of information recognized under Article 19(1)(a) of the Constitution of India. The RTI Act, 2005 is a revolutionary legislation in the history of democratic India. Along with this process in parliament, various judgments were also passed on account of petitions filed by many citizens from time to time, like, while giving judgment in the Uttar Pradesh V/S Raj Narayan case 1975, which was related to the election of Mrs. Indira Gandhi, Supreme court stated that every citizen has the right to know about the working of the government as the petition was filed for irregularities of Mrs. Gandhi election. Similarly, in other case, S. P. Gupta V/S Union of India 1981, against the mass transfer of Judges, the court gave its verdict that the citizens have the right to know about the true facts behind every action initiated by the government. Such actions from time to time paved way to the development and passing of the right to information act 2005. The RTI act can be considered as the second freedom of India. This Act has the potential to bring accountability and transparency in the government's functioning and to transform governance. It can

make every citizen a participator in the governance process rather than being mute spectators. This act empowered each Indian to seek information from public authorities. This act can make the government and its functionaries more accountable and responsible. More than Eleven years have passed to the implementation of RTI-Act, but still there is lack of awareness among citizens of India.

## **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

Review of literature revealed that some studies are conducted to know the awareness of teachers' present status of knowledge of RTI and effect of awareness programme. Thote (2007) has found that the secondary school teachers are moderately aware about RTI and they are less concerned with its proper use. It is also observed that there is significant difference among male-female and urban & rural teachers regarding the awareness about Right to Information Act. Sahu & Dwivedi (2008), Singh, et al. (2010) and Kumar (2011) explained that RTI is taken as the fundamental right, the objective of RTI act can be achieved when there are certain changes needed to be done in the existing system of providing the information, sought by the Act. Standing against corruption which has been a major anxiety for our country for decades, has an answer potentially in the hands of RTI. According to Shekhar (2010) the recent communication technologies create and collect substantial records about individuals in the process of providing communication. Tiwari (2010) in his article "Right To Information: An important tool of social development, good governance and strong democracy" explains that RTI Act can be effective in informing crores of people at grassroot level whose development is flawed due to corruption. According to him, the greatest challenge of today's India is bad governance. Chitra & Neelamalar (2013) say that for past 5 years, usage of social networking sites has increased among youth. According to a latest poll, 22% of teenagers log in more than 10 times a day on to their favorite social media sites. Social networking sites discuss various topics that lead to social change by creating awareness on the topics it discuss. One of the topics is the RTI Act. Arunkumar & Kirithika (2016) in their study on awareness of RTI-Act 2005 among B.Ed. student- teachers in Coimbatore district found that awareness among selected sample was very low. No significant difference was found between the student-teachers with respect to the variables - gender, locality, family type, residence, marital status and medium of instruction. These few reviews show the different areas of research on RTI and some gaps in the research on RTI act awareness. There was no research study found in literature to know awareness of college/university teachers towards RTI, with respect to their experience and stream. RTI-act has proved to be a magic wand in our hands for good governance. But, there are a few question marks on its success. We find that, at times some fake or irrelevant information is given to the seeker, even the whistle blowers ask for irrelevant facts, the guilty are not penalized and no action is initiated against them. People are also not that much participative. Therefore, we find that after so many years and with so much of the changes being introduced, the act is not as effective as it should have been. It can be attributed to the lack of awareness amongst the masses and also due to some flaws existing in the act, which discourages the initiative on people's part. So, after reviewing the above literature investigator planned to conduct a study on Awareness among college and university teachers towards Right to Information Act-2005. Teachers have been chosen for study because investigator felt that they are the best reflectors and also assumed to belong to an aware section of the society. They are also responsible for disseminating awareness and information amongst the masses and their acceptability ratio is also high.

## **OBJECTIVE**

- To study the differences in the level of awareness among people with respect to experience and stream.

## **HYPOTHESIS**

- There is no significant difference in mean scores of awareness of RTI act of teachers on the basis of experience.

- There is no significant difference in mean scores of awareness of RTI act of teachers from different streams (Arts and Science).

## METHOD

The study was a descriptive survey in nature.

### Sample

Purposive sampling technique was used to select the sample for the study. Sample for this study comprised of 70 college and university teachers attending an orientation and refresher course in UGC-HRDC, Shimla, Himachal Pradesh from different states in India. The investigator classified the sample on the basis of experience (less than 5 years and more than 5 years) and stream (arts and science).

## MEASURE

Self prepared questionnaire on awareness of teachers towards RTI-Act was used to assess the awareness of teachers towards RTI-Act. Review of literature was done to frame questions. Opinion of the experts was also taken to modify the questionnaire. Final draft contains 22 items. Items of the test include questions having yes and no answer type questions. Each participant will give any one response. One (1) mark is given for the Yes response and zero (0) mark is given for No response. In this way, the total score of the teacher's awareness toward RTI-Act is taken-out.

## PROCEDURE

In the study, a self prepared questionnaire was used to assess the awareness of teachers towards RTI-Act. Selected sample was administered questionnaire on awareness of teachers toward RTI Act (developed by the investigators). Significance between means was worked out to know the awareness of teachers toward RTI-Act.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1; Group wise mean scores, S.D., N and t-value of mean scores of teachers' awareness towards RTI-Act 2005, on the basis of experience (less than 5 years and more than 5 years of service)

Experience	N	Mean	S.D.	S.E <sub>D</sub>	t-value	Remarks
Less than 5 Years	23	12.00	4.85	1.05	1.24	Not significant even at .05 level of significance
More than 5 Years	45	10.69	3.73			

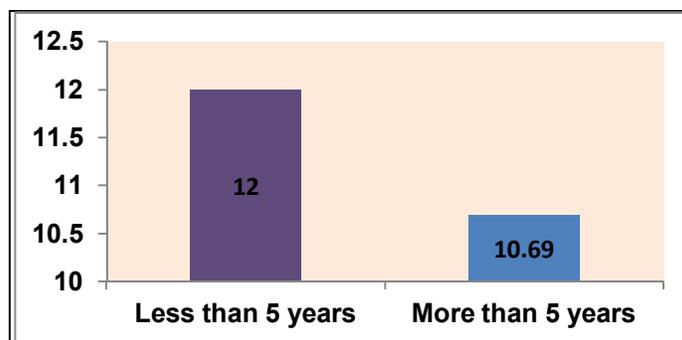


Figure 1: Graphical representation of Mean scores of teachers' awareness towards RTI-Act 2005 having less than 5 years and more than 5 years' service

From table 1 and Figure 1 it is evident that the mean scores of teachers less than 5 years and more than 5 years' service are 12.00 and 10.69 respectively. Table shows that SD for teachers less than

5 years and more than 5 years' of service is 4.85 and 3.73 respectively. Teachers less than 5 years of service have higher mean score than Teachers having more than 5 years of service. Further, to check that whether this difference in teachers' mean scores is significant or not, t-test was applied. The value of t-test is 1.24, which is not significant even at 0.05 level with df 66. It indicates that the mean scores of teachers less than 5 years and more than 5 years' service do not differ significantly. It may therefore be concluded that teachers in both groups were equal on test scores of teachers' awareness towards RTI-Act 2005 among Male and Female. Hence hypothesis stating "There is no significant difference in mean scores of awareness of RTI act of teachers on the basis of experience" stands accepted.

Table 2: Group wise mean scores, S.D., N and t-value of mean scores of awareness toward RTI-Act 2005 of teachers' from Arts and Science streams

Stream	N	Mean	S.D.	S.E <sub>D</sub>	t-value	Remarks
Arts	27	12.33	3.47	1.00	2.39*	significant at .05 level of significance
Science	38	9.92	4.34			

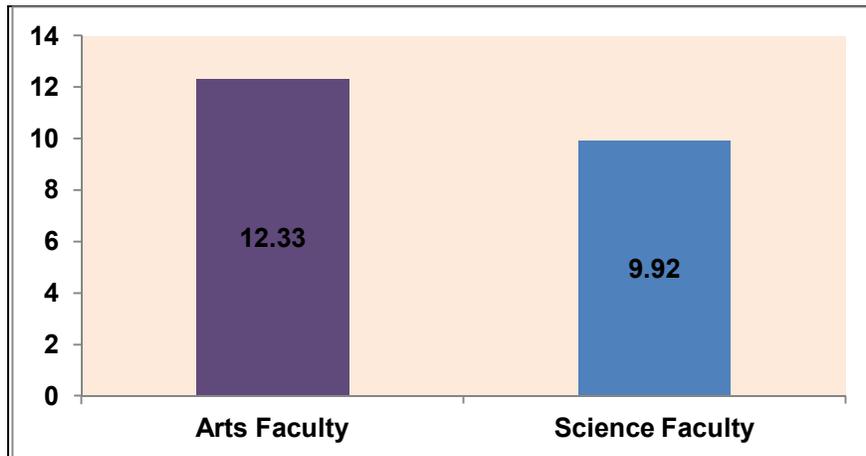


Figure 2: Graphical representation of Mean scores of teachers' awareness toward RTI-Act 2005 from arts and Science faculty

From table 2 and Figure 2 it is evident that the mean scores of teachers from Arts and Science faculty are 12.33 and 9.92 respectively. Table shows that SD for teachers from Arts and Science faculty is 3.47 and 4.34 respectively. Teachers from Arts faculty have higher mean score than teachers from Science faculty. Further, to check that whether this difference in teachers' mean scores is significant or not t-test was applied. The value of t-test is 2.39 which is significant at 0.05 level with df 63. It indicates that the mean scores of teachers from Arts and Science faculty differ significantly. Arts teachers have more awareness towards RTI-Act 2005. Hence, hypothesis stating "There is no significant difference in mean scores of awareness of RTI act of teachers from arts and Science faculty" was rejected at 0.05 level of significance.

### CONCLUSION:

It can be concluded that there is no significant difference found on the awareness towards RTI Act-2005 among teachers on the bases of experience. On the other side, on the bases of stream teachers differ significantly in the awareness towards RTI Act-2005. Arts teachers have more awareness towards RTI-Act 2005 as compared to science stream teachers.

## REFERENCES

- Arunkumar, K. & Kirithika, S. (2016). Awareness of RTI-Act 2005 among B.Ed student-teachers in Coimbatore district. *Edutracks*, 15(11), July, 2016.
- Chitra, P. & Neelamalar, M. (2013). Social Networking Sites (SNS) and Right to Information (RTI) Act: A study on Facebook and Twitter. *International Journal of Business and Management Invention* ISSN (Online): 2319-8028, ISSN (Print): 2319-801X. 2 (6) Retrieved from [www.ijbmi.org](http://www.ijbmi.org)
- Kumar, N. (2011). *Treatise on Right to Information Act, 2005* (3rd Ed.,) pp. 352-401.
- Rani, P. (2010). Right to Information as a tool to promote and strengthen democracy. *Global Media Journal*. Indian Edition Winter Issue/December 2010. Retrieved from <http://www.caluniv.ac.in/global-media-journal/WINTER%202010%20ARTICLES/Article%206.pdf>
- Sahu, G. P and Dwivedi, P. (2008). Towards Effective Implementation of Right to Information Act. Department of Management Studies, Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Delhi.
- Sekhar (2010). Right to information in strengthening participatory democracy, *Global media journal* PP: 1-5
- Singh, H., Chouhan, S.S. & Sharma, S.D. (2012). Level Of Awareness On The Right To Information Act, 2005 Among Beneficiaries In Selected Districts Of Rajasthan, Indian Journal Of Applied Research Volume, 2, Issue, 1 October 2012. ISSN - 2249-555x
- Thote, P. (2007). Study of awareness of awareness about right to information (rti) act among senior secondary school teachers in central India, Gyanodaya vidya mandir, Narsingarh. *Reviews of Literature*, Volume 1, Issue 5 / Dec 2013 ISSN:-2347-2723
- Tiwari (2010). Right to information: an important tool of social development, good governance and strong democracy, *Global Media journal*, PP:1-5
- [http:// mib.nic.in](http://mib.nic.in)
- [http:// nwda.gov.in](http://nwda.gov.in)
- [http:// www.dae.gov.in](http://www.dae.gov.in)
- [http:// www.righttoinformation.info](http://www.righttoinformation.info)