
UNCOVERING THE POWER OF RTI AS A REVOLUTIONARY TOOL FOR IT-DRIVEN SOCIAL CHANGE

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ABSTRACT

The enactment of the Right to Information Act, 2005 which provides for the Right to Information to the citizens from public authorities or departments. Right to Information is a foot of the Right to freedom of Speech and Expression mentioned in the constitution under Article 19(1) (a). This act becomes the basis of equity, justice, and good conscience. The biggest challenge for the implementation of the RTI Act is that the citizens are not aware of the scope and power of the same.

In addition, the manuscript also highlights the ways and explains that how the better implementation of the Right to Information Act will bring social change in society and human dynamics, along with that, the paper explains the relation between the Right to Information and good governance.

Moreover, the advent of new technology will make the branch of RTI that will help for the better implementation of the said Act. The paper analyses the core areas which pose challenges or hurdles for the implementation and also provides the solutions with their advantages or benefits. The paper includes the new ways with the help of Information Technology which led to the better implementation of the Act to each and every part of the country and will connect the whole system at a single and common server.

Furthermore, this paper also scrutinises how the better implementation of RTI act in the whole country proportionate in the achieving the objectives and fulfils the basis of Sustainable Development Goals.

*"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."*¹

-Justice P N Bhagwati

*"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."*²

- James Madison, 4th President of the United States of America 4 August 1822.

1. Introduction

An Act of the Indian parliament entitled **"to provide for laying out a realistic regime of access to information for citizens"** is known as the "Right to Information" Act of 2005 (RTI).

Every citizen has the unalienable and natural right to information³. Each individual has the Right to Freedom of Expression in a democracy or in a democratic country like India under **Art. 19(1)(a)** of the Indian Constitution.⁴ This freedom of speech includes the ability to ask for, receive, and share information⁵ and ideas with public authorities. *Two significant constitutional articles, namely the Right to Information (RTI) and Article 19(1)(a) of the Indian Constitution, which ensures the freedom of speech and expression, intersect in the case of **Raj Narain v. State of UP**⁶. Raj Narain in this instance filed a writ suit to obtain access to specific secret government records.*

¹ 'BCCI Under The Ambit Of Right To Information: To Be Or Not To Be? - Sport - India' <<https://www.mondaq.com/india/sport/928724/bcci-under-the-ambit-of-right-to-information-to-be-or-not-to-be>> accessed 14 April 2023

²Implementing Access to Information, 'A practical guide for operationalising access to information laws'(2003) <https://www.humanrightsinitiative.org/publications/rti/implementing_ati.pdf> accessed 17 April 2023

³ section 3 of RTI Act

⁴ Law & Justice, 'Constitution of India- Article 19(1)(a) (1950)'<https://www.indiacode.nic.in/bitstream/123456789/15240/1/constitution_of_india.pdf> accessed 17 April 2023

⁵ Section 2(f) of RTi act

⁶ (1975) 4 SCC 428

Government officials claimed that releasing the documents would jeopardize national security because they contained sensitive information.

The Right to knowledge is a crucial component of the basic Right to Freedom of Speech and Expression under Article 19(1) (a), the Supreme Court concluded in Raj Narain's favour. The court additionally ruled that the right to know was fundamental in a democratic society and that the government's argument of national security was insufficient to justify withholding the records.

The Right to Information, when it is available, aids citizens in leading respectable lives in a civilized society. ⁷ Before, only citizens of nine states in the nation had access to this information, but after the Central Act's implementation on October 12, 2005, all citizens have this privilege. ⁸ Freedom of information encourages transparency in government operations, makes the executive branch more accountable, and eventually lowers corruption.



The major goal of the RTI Act is to give citizens more authority. To do this, the country's leader must work to increase transparency and accountability in government operations, eradicate corruption, and make it possible for democracy to function truly in the interests of the populace. More educated individuals are more organised and prepared to keep a close eye on administrative

⁷ Borah, S. K. (2013). Right to Information Act: A Key to Good Governance. International Journal of Humanities and Social Science: VOL -2, Issue- 2 p.11.

⁸ RTI Act, 2005 (Amended)- English version.pdf, Available at
<[https://rti.gov.in/RTI%20Act,%202005%20\(Amended\)-English%20Version.pdf](https://rti.gov.in/RTI%20Act,%202005%20(Amended)-English%20Version.pdf)>

instruments and increase public accountability for the government. This legislation represents a big step toward better educating the populace about how their government functions.⁹

The advent of new technologies like Artificial Intelligence (AI) and other new technologies in the human disciplines makes access to information very quick and fast, which has majorly dealt the Information Technology Act, 2000. A key tool in the RTI implementation process is Information & Technology (IT). By promoting transparency and accountability, the use of IT tools has made it simpler for citizens to obtain information. This rapidness proportionally impacts the access to justice for the public at large.

2. The Role of Information Technology in RTI

An instrument for encouraging accountability and transparency in public institutions is the Right to Information (RTI) Act. The development of Information Technology (IT) has made it easier for citizens to access information. IT tools like *websites, mobile applications, and online platforms* **have** boosted transparency by making it simpler for people to access information about government policies, choices, and actions.¹⁰

According to *Sec 4 of the RTI act*, government organizations and public authorities are obligated to keep their official websites updated with current or updated information and respond to RTI requests within the prescribed time frame.¹¹ The emergence of new technologies and other technicalities will assist the public authorities¹² in ***maintaining all the public information*** or the information that falls under ***Section 2(f)***¹³ for a longer duration of time, because it has been observed that some of the RTI applications have not been served and the request for the information has not been furnished because the concerned public authorities are unable to process and maintain such old and large information. The efficient use of technology has resulted, public institutions being more responsible and answerable to the general public. This will make the

⁹ 'Objectives and Features of Right To Information Act, 2005' (*Unacademy*)

<<https://unacademy.com/content/upsc/study-material/general-awareness/objectives-and-features-of-right-to-information-act-2005/>> accessed 15 April 2023

¹⁰ Trust Through Transparency, 'RTI Paves the Way'

<https://cic.gov.in/sites/default/files/Trust_Through_Transparency.pdf> accessed 21 April 2023

¹¹ section 4 of RTI act, 2005

¹² Section 2(h) of RTI act, 2005

¹³ Section 2(f) of RTI act, 2005

system smooth and free from *Red Tapism*, and all the public authorities and other offices will become more efficient in furnishing the RTI requests. The manner in which a person can exercise their Right to Information has undergone a radical change as a result of use of IT tools. Information is now more accessible and available, increasing transparency and accountability, which benefits citizen's participation in democracy by empowering them with more knowledge.¹⁴

- **How does IT help in the implementation of RTI?**

The process of filing the RTI (Right to Information) has completely changed. It has sped up, increased transparency, and improved the effectiveness of the entire process.

By facilitating faster, more effective, and open access to information, IT has significantly contributed to the implementation of Right to Information (RTI). *IT enables easy access to information for citizens to submit RTI requests online, removing the need for applicants to physically visit government offices or post offices to submit their applications.* Both the citizens and the public authorities benefit from the time and effort savings of this approach. Applications are submitted online and forwarded immediately to the relevant or concerned department; answers are also provided through online mode. As a result, it *makes the system easy and convenient, which invites more applications of RTI, facilitates increased transparency in the country, and a social change in human dynamics.* Moreover, IT makes it easier to handle RTI requests promptly and lowers corruption authorities and promotes transparency. The *public can readily have access to more information available to more people when it is in electronic form.*

Additionally, IT has aided in the implementation of RTI by *providing safe information storage and retrieval, protecting the requester's privacy and personal information.* Technology has also made it possible to respond to RTI requests more quickly and accurately within the allotted time range, which contributes to the successful implementation of RTI.

Examples: - Mobile apps, online dashboards, and online portals for submitting RTI requests are a few of the IT tools employed in the RTI implementation process. Additionally, it is now simpler

¹⁴ '(PDF) Big Data Analytics in Smart Grids: State-of-the-Art, Challenges, Opportunities, and Future Directions' <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/330905205_Big_Data_Analytics_in_Smart_Grids_State-of-the-Art_Challenges,_Opportunities,_and_Future_Directions> accessed 21 April 2023

for citizens to access information because of the digitization of public documents.

3. RTI's Role in Achieving Social Change

The RTI act has been in effect for more than a decade and has significantly aided in promoting transparency and accountability in public authority. By enabling people to exercise their rights and hold government institutions responsible, RTI helps to bring about social change. Also, it aids in increasing transparency and spreading awareness, which can shift attitudes and opinions. *It has also established a workable regime for granting citizens access to information that is under the control of the public authority, which is the prima facie of RTI Act.*¹⁵ According to said statute, the public now has numerous rights to information about what the government is doing. Additionally, a duty to supply, it also includes an obligation to disclose or disseminate information. ***RTI should not only be viewed as a piece of legislation but also as a component of society that has made a significant contribution to social transformation.*** It gives citizens a way to get information that they can use to keep the government accountable or to look for an explanation of why decisions have been made in such a way, who made them, why they were made, and what will be the results. *There is no room for any arbitrary judgment because it has been mandated that every public entity must give explanations for its administrative and quasi-judicial decisions to anyone seeking information under Sec. 4(1) (d) of the Act.*¹⁶

As it had such a profound effect on the populace, the government was successfully shown to be in danger, which resulted in significant changes in how they acted and thought. Giving individuals information is governed by strong regulations, and breaking such regulations can result in fines or other sanctions. ***RTI is used as a tool to advance democratic governance, improve participatory democracy, and facilitate the efficient provision of social-economic services.*** *Increasing people's options for higher earnings, better education, health care, and a cleaner environment with a richer cultural life is necessary for improving their quality of life.* Promoting citizen-government partnerships is one important way that RTI has assisted in designing and implementing

¹⁵ J. P. Mittal, *India's Fight Against Corruption* (Atlantic Publishers and Distributors Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi, 1st edn., 2017).

¹⁶ S.P. Sathe, "Right to Information," (LexisNexis Butterworths, New Delhi, 1st edn., 2006).

development programs for this purpose.¹⁷ Lastly, it can spur social movements and activism, bringing about a profound shift in society.

On December 16, 2015, the Supreme Court rendered a decision in the case of *Reserve Bank of India v. Jayantilal N. Mistry*¹⁸, in which the RBI and other banks had contested the Central Information Commission's orders directing them to provide information that citizens had requested under the Right to Information Act, 2005.

The Court had to decide whether RBI and other banks might refuse to give citizens the information they requested under the RTI Act based on business interests, commercial confidence, or fiduciary relationships with regard to the public interest. The Court dismissed RBI's arguments that the information sought was excluded from disclosure under the RTI Act since it was acquired in a fiduciary capacity [under section 8 (e)] and that disclosing such banking-related information would negatively impact the nation's economic interests. According to the Court, exemptions only apply in extraordinary circumstances and only to information whose disclosure is unjustified or undesirable. The Court held that a fiduciary relationship cannot be applied to the data that banks disclose with the RBI. The Court also ruled that there is no "trust" relationship between the RBI and the banks because the RBI has no obligation under the law to maximize any bank's gain. It was decided that the RBI must act transparently and provide the information on private and public banks that individuals have requested under the RTI Act since it is their legal obligation to protect the interests of the general public, the nation's economy, and the banking sector.

Other regulators may be required to submit information gleaned through inspection and audit reports regarding the firms they supervise in accordance with the RTI Act as the result of the verdict. The regulators won't be required to share information about ongoing investigations or if it could violate someone's privacy.

4. Significance of the RTI Act and Need in Changing Social Ideologies

The primary impact of the RTI is that it provides every individual citizen of the country a right to

¹⁷ Dr. T. Sita Kumari, "Whistleblowers and the Laws In India-A Brief Study", Vol. XII, No. 3 Nyaya Deep, 63 (2011).

¹⁸ 382 (2015) Scc Online SC 1326

access information, and consequently, it puts power directly into the hands of the foundation of democracy, i.e., the citizens of the country. *The judiciary has already acknowledged the right to information as a component and part of the fundamental right to freedom of expression*,¹⁹ and this right is crucial for numerous reasons, including the following:-

(a) RTI aids in the democratization of Governance

The prerequisite for the democratization of government is access to information. It aids in various ways in preventing the abuse of administrative power for personal benefit and in advancing justice, equity, and fair play. L. D. White noted this as a result. "Control is necessary for power in a democracy; the more power, the greater the control." One of the tools required for checking the power and guaranteeing better accountability is the right to knowledge.

(b) Optimal Public Participation

Since effective citizen participation in government is a requirement for good governance in any democracy, *citizens must have access to the information they need to understand exactly how government operations are carried out, take part in the planning stages, and assess whether particular plans and initiatives will benefit them or not.* By eliminating superfluous confidentiality clauses, *the Right to Information idea not only enhances the quality of decision-making but also makes it easier for people to formulate policies on the problems that are important to them.*²⁰

(c) Rule of law

The Right to Information *lowers the likelihood that government resources will be misused, lessens corruption, aids in better governance, holds service providers accountable for their duties, and fosters a participatory and transparent environment that allows the public to participate in policymaking and the establishment of the rule of law.* Information, when used in its true spirit, has the power to effect the necessary change in the administrative structure and to make people accountable for doing things that are typically disregarded.

¹⁹ Article 19 (1)(a) of Indian Constitution

²⁰ Rajvir S Dhaka, Right to Information and Good Governance, 4 Indian Journal of Public Administration, 536 (2009).

(d) Safeguarding civil liberties

By facilitating the monitoring of wrongdoings like custodial fatalities and the abuse of preventative detention laws by civil society organizations, the right to information is crucial for safeguarding the rights of the populace. *No democracy can be relevant if civil society is unable to evaluate how well-elected officials, government employees, and other state functionaries are performing their duties.* In order to audit the government's performance, the populace must be well-informed on the policies, activities, and failures of the government. *A recognized populace is therefore a prerequisite for democracy.*

(e) Ensure the Strengthening of Public Opinion

As a prosperous democracy cannot support peace and harmony, access to knowledge is crucial to its health.²¹ Even though the government guarantees the Right to Information, *residents nevertheless rely on media like newspapers, radio, television, etc. to learn about daily government operations.* The media acts as a conduit between the populace and the government. *The media contributes to the development of what can be called "free market concepts" that encourage free thought.* Thus, it is essential that the media have access to information. The media's right to an unregulated market is not a unique luxury but rather a component of the public's right to information. *The media has numerous issues as a result of not having the legal right to acquire official information.*

When the main sources of information are suppressed, balanced reporting becomes challenging. They deliver biased news, hiding or distorting information in the absence of accurate information. *By granting the right to information, the public, the media, and the government would all work together to increase government accountability.*²²

(f) Implementing Governmental Plans in an Efficient and Appropriate Manner

The federal and state governments operate several programs in rural areas to provide food, housing,

²¹ Shashi Bala Kashyap, "The Right to Information and the Role of Media" 39 (162) Indian Socio-Legal Journal 29-30 (2013).

²² Mullick Souvanik, Right to Information and the Role of the Media, 96 AIR 31 (2009).

jobs, and education. These programs are aimed at the poorest in rural areas, but there have been widespread accusations that the money has been routinely or extensively misappropriated or misused. *Even if they are aware they do not receive all of their entitlements under the system or take less than their allotment, most people are unaware that such programs even exist.* ²³

Because no one outside the government has access to them, records are frequently hindered. As a result, information guarantees more transparency than ever before in how public agencies operate. Hence, *the release of crucial information stops corrupt practices in service delivery, ensures that the needy receive entitlements, and also increases administration accountability.* ²⁴

5. The Implementation of RTI through Information Technology brings its own set of challenges.

- **Lack of Awareness and Interest in Using IT for RTI**

Not everyone feels comfortable utilizing technology. The use of IT for RTI may not be well-known or appealing. Likewise, *those who live in rural locations without access to the internet or who lack technological sophistication may find it difficult to get information online.* The failure to use Information Technology (IT) to advance the Right to Information can have a number of negative effects. Access to information kept by public bodies is made possible by the Right to Information, which is a fundamental human right and is essential for fostering transparency, accountability, and good governance. *However, if people lack interest in using IT for this purpose or are unaware of how IT might be used to exercise this right, it may have a number of unfavourable effects, such as:*

1. **Information Access Restrictions:** The way information is managed, shared, and stored has radically changed as a result of IT. *Through internet portals, databases, and webpages, public organizations can give the general public simple access to information. However, if people don't know about these platforms or are unwilling to use them, they may miss out on crucial information*

²³ Mulage, Bheemabai S., "Impact of Right to Information Act on common people" 14 Karnataka Law Journal 23 (2011).

²⁴ J.P. Rai, "The Right to Information Act, 2005: Retrospect and Prospects," 42 (2) The Banaras Law Journal 74 (2013).

that could be beneficial for their own needs or the needs of their communities. People might not be able to make informed judgments or hold public authorities responsible if they have limited access to critical information.

2. **Ineffective Information Retrieval:** Conventional information access methods, such as sending paper requests or going to government offices in person, can be cumbersome, challenging, and prone to delays. By providing *online capabilities for making requests, tracking their status, and receiving responses electronically, IT can hasten the information-gathering process. But if people don't know about or don't want to use these technologies, they might keep using outdated and laborious methods, which would lead to delays and frustrations when trying to access information.*
3. **Decreased Accountability and Transparency:** *IT may increase accountability and transparency by making data on how public authorities function, make decisions, and take actions easily and quickly accessible. The ability of citizens to hold institutions and public officials accountable for their actions or decisions may then improve. However, it can result in diminished transparency and accountability, which could result in the abuse of power, corruption, and a lack of trust in governmental institutions, if individuals are uninformed of or uninterested in using IT for this purpose.*
4. **Missed Opportunities for Participatory Governance:** By offering forums for public participation, feedback, and input during decision-making processes, IT can also facilitate participatory governance. This can *build a sense of ownership and empowerment among citizens while promoting citizen participation and inclusivity in governance.* Nevertheless, if people are unaware of or uninterested in using these platforms, it may restrict the potential of participatory governance by resulting in wasted chances for meaningful interaction and contribution.

The consequences of a lack of awareness and interest in using IT to advance the Right to Information include information access restrictions, ineffective information retrieval, decreased accountability and transparency, missed opportunities for participatory governance, and a widening of the digital divide, to name just a few. Fostering awareness of and interest in using technology for the Right to Information is vital for ensuring transparency, accountability, and good governance in society. *This can be done by empowering individuals with the skills and knowledge*

necessary to effectively use IT to exercise their Right to Information through outreach, education, and training programs.

- **Limitations of Information and Technology in Access to Information**

The veracity of the information is one of the constraints of Information Technology. It is impossible to ensure the veracity and correctness of the information on the Internet. *Additionally, not all information is accessible online, so some information requests might need to be handled using more conventional procedures.*

A fundamental right that gives people access to information from the government and other public organizations is the Right to Information. The authenticity of the information presented, however, may be hampered by the information and technological limitations. ***First off, the proliferation of information made possible by the internet makes it challenging to discriminate between true and incorrect information.*** As a result, it is challenging to verify the veracity of information released by the government. ***Second, information can be manipulated and changed by technical developments such as deep fake videos, which can spread false information.*** As a result, false information may travel quickly, confusing the public and causing panic. ***Last but not least,*** some industries might not have sufficient access to technology improvements, which makes it challenging for them to share essential information. Therefore, it is important to ensure the dissemination of reliable information because the availability of Information Technology can limit its legitimacy.

6. Successful RTI Implementation with Information Technology (Technology and RTI)

The advancement of Information Technology may make the field of Right to Information more effective and efficient at the ends of both parties and the other agency or department to which it is related. So there are numerous key strategies and practices which can ensure a successful implementation of RTI and also helps in providing great satisfaction of justice.



The main tactics for successfully implementing RTI are *spreading knowledge of it, giving people training and developing their capacities, bolstering IT infrastructure, and streamlining the RTI procedure. Building a strong monitoring and evaluation system can also aid in bettering RTI implementation and also spread awareness by acknowledging the people about the technology by going home to home and by establishing a committee related to the spread of knowledge about the scope of technology in the arena of accessing information to the public at large.*

These are some of the practices through which technology makes the process of access to information to the public at large becomes smooth. It includes online portals through which access to information becomes easy through the support of Information and technology, and it has the following advantages:

- **Advantages of Online RTI Portals**

1. **Expansion of Access to Information:** Online RTI portals can offer a user-friendly platform for anyone to submit information requests and access information held by public agencies. Removing the need for users to physically visit government offices and enabling them to quickly submit requests from their homes or offices, can boost access to information.
2. **Increased Efficiency and Transparency:** Using online portals can make requesting information, monitoring its status, and obtaining responses easier. As the entire process can be watched and

monitored online, this can lead to enhanced efficiency, fewer delays, and openness in the treatment of RTI requests.

3. **Improves Accountability:** By giving citizens a way to hold public authorities accountable for their deeds or choices, online portals can promote accountability. Online portals can enable citizens to seek redress and ensure that public bodies uphold their commitments under RTI rules by making information freely accessible and offering a place for registering complaints or grievances relating to RTI requests
4. **Promotes Public Participation:** By giving the public a venue for involvement, feedback, and input throughout decision-making processes, online portals can promote citizen participation. As a result, citizens might feel more involved in and empowered by their government, which might encourage them to actively participate in decision-making.
5. **Improves Transparency and Trust:** By making information freely accessible to all citizens and publicly available, online portals can encourage transparency and trust. This can increase the public's image of and confidence in governmental institutions by enhancing the credibility of public authority and encouraging transparency in their operations.
6. **Reaching a Wide Range of Audiences:** Internet portals can be created to be inclusive and accessible to a variety of audiences, including those with disabilities, senior citizens, and members of underserved groups. This can encourage diversity and guarantee that all residents, regardless of their backgrounds or skills, have access to information through RTI.

It is significant to remember that the advantages of online portals for RTI can change depending on how each portal is implemented and used. *To ensure that online portals effectively advance transparency, accountability, and citizen participation in the Right to Information process, proper design, implementation, and routine monitoring are essential.*

- **Effective use of IT Tools for RTI.**

In order to effectively employ IT tools for RTI, *user-friendly interfaces must be created, secure information access must be provided, data privacy must be ensured, and social media and mobile*

applications must be used to boost public involvement in the RTI procedure. This enhances directly or indirectly the credibility of the Right to information and the flow of the data to the persons to whom it relates or requires.

1. **Access information in a safe manner:** For making the RTI more useful and friendly to the public at large, it should be necessary that the information or the data that would provide or is provided to the person who has filed the RTI and the person about whom the information has provided, that should be *secured access of information at both the ends*. In other words, it can be said that the *course of the transaction of information should be secured*. So that the public can make more use of RTI for getting information which leads to an increase in transparency and accountability in the country.
2. **Privacy and Data Protection:** The information and the data that has been requested to provide and the information that has been given should be protected from the public at large. It should be preferred that the information should be *confidential between the parties and the persons to whom it relates*.

This becomes the duty of Information Technology to provide the efficient privacy as required from *the protection of the infringement of data privacy and other cybercrimes*.

7. Challenges and Opportunities in Future Implementations

A key tool for advancing Indian democracy is the Right to Information Act, 2005. The act's implementation has the potential to improve government accountability, transparency, and citizen participation.

- **Digital Literacy**

As a Challenge: The *'digital literacy'* is a significant problem and is essential to the Right to Information Act's effective implementation. *A sizable segment of the population is excluded from the benefits of the Right to Information Act due to restricted access to digital infrastructure, a lack of digital skills, and inadequate awareness of how to use digital platforms.* The statute

cannot guarantee that all citizens will participate in the democratic process if they lack digital literacy.

As an Opportunity: Therefore, the task is to spread digital education at the grassroots level in addition to providing *access to digital infrastructure*. This necessitates *spending on digital infrastructure, developing suitable educational initiatives, and fostering partnerships between the public and commercial sectors*. The Right to Information Act should be implemented more broadly by giving priority to initiatives that promote digital literacy.

- **Data Privacy**

As a Challenge: Ensuring '*data privacy*' is one of the main difficulties in putting the Right to Information into practice. Protecting personal information and preventing the exploitation or abuse of sensitive data are essential.²⁵

As an Opportunity: For data collection, storage, and distribution, rigid systems are needed. The implementation of the Right to Information may offer a special chance to increase governance's accountability and openness. It can provide citizens more authority to hold public servants responsible for their acts and guarantee that the government is serving the needs of the populace. Several steps can be done to protect data privacy when the Right to Information is implemented. *Strict data protection regulations, the use of secure platforms for data transfer and storage, and staff training on how to handle sensitive information* are a few examples of these. The implementation procedure should also include sensitive and secret terms that emphasize the significance of safeguarding data privacy and confidentiality. This will help to ensure that the Right to Information is implemented effectively while lowering the dangers of data privacy infractions.²⁶

- **Data Standards and Protocols**

As a Challenge: The Right to Information is still developing, and different nations have varying

²⁵ 'Perspectives on Future of Data Privacy and Challenges | SAP Blogs'

<<https://blogs.sap.com/2021/07/12/perspectives-on-future-of-data-privacy-and-challenges/>> accessed 21 April 2023

²⁶ Bs M, 'CHALLENGES TO PRIVACY AND DATA PROTECTION IN INDIA' (2022) 10

rules and regulations due to the **lack of universal standards**. As a result, developing a global set of **'data standards and protocols'** is challenging. Despite legislation being passed, several nations still struggle with RTI implementation. Significant obstacles include a **lack of legal literacy, bureaucratic resistance, and a lack of efficient monitoring systems**. These aspects of information can still be an issue, even with the Right to Information law in place. *The accuracy and dependability of the information provided must be guaranteed. The use of technology is growing, and cyber security is a growing issue. Hacking and data breaches can jeopardize the right to information and threaten privacy.*²⁷

As an Opportunity: Building digital literacy, maintaining data privacy, implementing data standards and protocols, and making user-friendly IT interfaces are some of the potential problems associated with future RTI and IT implementations. Additionally, the use of IT can aid in enhancing the administration's efficiency and transparency, supporting good governance and social transformation. In conclusion, the efficient use of Information Technology to implement the RTI Act has the potential to significantly improve society. RTI can contribute to the development of a more just and equitable society by facilitating transparency, accountability, and citizen empowerment. Even though adopting RTI through IT presents some difficulties, the advantages it provides cannot be overlooked. To increase the usability and efficacy of RTI, *it is crucial to investigate novel ways to make use of Information Technology.*

8. Right to Information and Sustainable Development Goals

The availability of knowledge to the general public is a key factor in sustainable development. *To provide universal access to education, promote some credentials of sustainable goals like inclusive economic growth, or improve environmental protection, accurate data and statistics are required. In order to underline its importance for good change and a brighter future for everyone, the Right to access Information has been included in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the United Nations 2030 Agenda as goal 16.10.*²⁸

²⁷ '(PDF) Big Data Analytics in Smart Grids: State-of-the-Art, Challenges, Opportunities, and Future Directions' <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/330905205_Big_Data_Analytics_in_Smart_Grids_State-of-the-Art_Challenges_Opportunities_and_Future_Directions> accessed 21 April 2023

²⁸ 'Goal 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions - SDG Tracker' (*Our World in Data*) <<https://sdg-tracker.org/peace-justice>> accessed 26 April 2023

A crucial first step for governments fulfilling SDG objective 16.10 is adopting an RTI statute. Such laws ensure that the public can access the information stored by the government, and they frequently require the establishment of particular public officials and operational procedures. 127 nations have so far enacted RTI law. However, it is common to see a lack of implementation. Therefore, in the vast majority of nations around the world, the potential of RTI legislation for equitable growth and good governance remains unrealized.²⁹

This is partially brought on by a knowledge gap that exists between *authorities* and the *general public*: ***The main barriers to the implementation of the RTI law are a lack of infrastructure and a lack of political will***, which are made more difficult by enduring cultures of secrecy inside public institutions. On the other hand, the relevance of the legislation is frequently unknown to the general public and other stakeholders. Additionally, there is a lack of understanding of the processes in place that permit demands for data from governmental entities.



RTI legislation must be fully implemented if the public is to be able to exercise their right to access public information. Raising public awareness and preparing public servants to handle RTI inquiries are crucial in this situation.

²⁹ Welle (www.dw.com) D, 'Right to Information Laws: Where Do We Stand? | DW | 24.05.2019' (DW.COM) <<https://www.dw.com/en/right-to-information-laws-where-do-we-stand/a-48812029>> accessed 26 April 2023

- **Relation of RTI and Sustainable Developments Goals**

RTI can contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) *by promoting transparency, accountability, and good governance*. It can help in monitoring and *evaluating the implementation of SDG targets, ensuring that resources are effectively utilized, and providing citizens with a voice in decision-making processes*.

In order to accomplish the aims of sustainable development, the Right to Information (RTI) Act might be extremely important. *First of all*, it can *encourage accountability and transparency in government actions and decision-making, ensuring that policies and programs adhere to the ideals of sustainable development*. Through more openness, resources can be used more effectively, corruption can be avoided, and citizen involvement in development can be improved. Through this, RTI helped make the system smoother for achieving the goals of sustainable development. *Second*, RTI enables citizens to hold governments and private sector players responsible for their activities by assisting in the monitoring of the effects of development projects on the environment and society. Better policies and initiatives that put social inclusion and sustainability first may result from this. *Finally*, RTI has the potential to *strengthen the protection of human rights and environmental justice by enabling disadvantaged communities to obtain information and exercise their rights*. The UN's sustainable development objectives, which aim to create a more just and sustainable world, depend on accomplishing these results.

RTI is a significant tool that might potentially support responsible government, social change, and accountability. *By giving individuals access to knowledge that can assist them in making educated decisions and holding those in authority responsible*, it empowers citizens. Information technology has made RTI even more accessible, and its effects can be seen in many different nations. RTI still faces implementation and use issues, nevertheless, and they must be overcome by coordinated efforts. RTI may continue to advance transparency and accountability, resulting in a better society for all, with the proper policies in place.

9. Conclusion

In a Democratic country like India where the Society and the citizen are the sole authority of the entire system. It becomes important for the democratic nation to have knowledge about all the

procedures and the information (except for the sensitive information and the data that hampers other person's personal space or privacy). To provide the information or to disseminate the data to the public at large in a legal manner led to the enactment of RTI act, 2005. Right to information and access to Information is one of the fundamental rights of a citizen and the same flows from provisions of article 19(1) (a) i.e., Freedom of speech and expression, in part 3 of the constitution of India.

Moreover, the RTI has its own branch of proceedings and the court system. Now in the contemporary, the IT sector has grown at its peak level which can make the whole RTI field smooth like by making friendly interfaces, online portals, and dashboards that help in removing the conservative approach to go in the government department and the concept of Red Tapism. It could make the whole system connected electronically which makes the system free from loopholes and provide efficiency at both ends.

But there are many challenges and difficulties present in each aspect who are connected with this system or the person to whom it relates, like how the people from remote areas will, be aware of the system, through what means they get the knowledge about the access of information. Providing education and constituting a committee, establishment of learning camps in remote areas are a few of the ways through which these challenges might get removed. RTI would also help in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Through the RTI Act we may achieve enhanced accountability and governance and when people are aware of it the updated data and information that helps in removing the corruption or abuse of power, etc. It fulfills the objective of SDGs when people are aware of the updated pieces of information. So that the citizen got updates on what is going on and how it will provide benefits to oneself. It puts the citizen in self-discipline and understands his or her own role or participation to fulfilled the objective of Sustainable Development Goals.