

STUDY OF RIGHT TO INFORMATION AWARENESS AMONG SCHOOL TEACHERS OF LUDHIANA DISTRICT

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ABSTRACT

The present study reveals the study of Right to information awareness among school teachers of Ludhiana District. For this study 100 school teachers were taken. Questionnaires on Right to Information Act, 2005 prepared by the investigator were used to collect the data. Significant difference between mean scores of the variable of Right to Information (RTI) awareness among male and female school teachers, more than 5 years of service and Up to 5 years of service school of teachers as well as among undergraduate, graduate and post graduate school teachers.

Keywords: *Right to information, Awareness, School Teachers*

Right to information is a right of citizens which can empower citizens to take charge by participating in decision-making and by challenging corrupt and arbitrary actions at all levels. With access to government records, citizens can evaluate and determine whether the government they have elected is delivering the results that are expected. RTI is thus a tool that can change the role of the citizens from being mere spectators to that of being active participants in the process of governance. Right to information is a right of citizens which can empower citizens to take charge by participating in decision-making and by challenging corrupt and arbitrary actions at all levels. With access to government records, citizens can evaluate and determine whether the government they have elected is delivering the results that are expected. RTI is thus a tool that can change the role of the citizens from being mere spectators to that of being active participants in the process of governance. At the International level, Right to Information and its aspects find articulation as a human right in most important basic human rights documents, namely, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. At regional levels, there are numerous other human rights documents, which

include this fundamental right for example, the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, the American Convention on Human Rights, the African Charter on Human and People's Rights, etc. The Commonwealth has also formulated principles on freedom of information. In India access to information held by a public authority was not possible until 2005. Lack of information barred a person to realize his socio-economic aspirations, because he had no basis to participate in the debate or question the decision making process even if it was harming him.

Ansari (2008) in his lecture concluded that RTI has significant bearing on good governance and development. The implementation of the law on right to know strengthened the knowledge society as well as increased the accountability of public bodies. Goel (2007) has attempted to make full use of whatever information has been made available to date on the working of the new information regime and has also raised certain issues himself. Central Information Commission (CIC), Government of India (2008) in a "Report of National Coordination Committee on Right to information" concluded that the free flow of information has been hampered by several factors. Lack of effective coordination & cooperation among State Information Commissions.

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Centre for Good Governance (CGG) (2009) conducted a assessment survey in different parts of India and concluded that low compliance resulting from weak political will and administrative commitment, indifference of public authorities, failure of bureaucracy, lack of accountability for implementation, prioritizing categories of information, expediting pace of cataloging, indexing and computerizing records, incentives for disclosure and penalty for not doing it. Actionable points need to be prioritized on the basis of identified gaps.

The right to information is implicit in the Constitution of India; even so the dominant culture of the executive has been one of secrecy and resolute denial of access of information to the citizen. Citizens groups have long battled for the exercise of these rights in courts. Information is power, and that the executive at all levels attempts to withhold information to increase its scope for control, patronage, and the arbitrary, corrupt and uncountable exercise of power. Therefore, demystification of rules and procedures, complete transparency and pro-active dissemination of this relevant information amongst the public is potentially a very strong safeguard against corruption. Ultimately the most effective systemic check on corruption would be where the citizen herself or himself has the right to take the initiative to seek information from the state, and thereby to enforce transparency and accountability. Information is the currency that every citizen requires to participate in the life and governance of society. The greater the access of the citizen to information, the greater would be the responsiveness of government to community needs. Alternatively, the greater the restrictions that are placed on access, the greater the feelings of 'powerlessness' and 'alienation'. Without information, people cannot adequately exercise their rights and responsibilities as citizens or make informed choices.

Operational Definition

Awareness toward Right to information Act: Awareness toward RTI Act, 2005 means the awareness of the teachers about RTI Act 2005 which will be assessed by the self-prepared questionnaire on RTI Act 2005.

School Teachers means teachers teaching different subjects in schools of Ludhiana..

Objectives of the Study

1. To study the Right to information Awareness among School Teachers.
2. To study and compare the Right to information Awareness of male and female school teachers.
3. To study and compare the Right to information Awareness of More than 5 years of service and Up to 5 years of service school teachers.

Hypotheses of the Study

1. There exists no significant difference in Right to Information (RTI) awareness among male and female school teachers.
2. There exists no significant difference in Right to Information (RTI) awareness among More than 5 years of service and up to 5 years of service of school teachers.
3. There exists no significant difference in Right to Information (RTI) awareness among undergraduate, graduate and post graduate school teachers.

Sample

The primary purpose of research is to discover principles that have universal application. But to study whose population to arrive at generalization would be impracticable, if possible some populations are so large that their characteristics cannot be measured; before the measurement could complete, the population would have changed. The process of sampling makes it possible to draw valid generalizations on the basis of careful observation of variables within a relatively small portion of the population. A sample is a small portion of the population selected for observation and analysis. Sample for the study was school teachers selected from various schools in Ludhiana.

Details in respect of samples used and the procedure of selection at both the stages are given below separately.

Sample for Study

The population of the study was teachers

teaching in different schools of Ludhiana district of Punjab. Sample was selected purposively. 100 School teachers were purposely selected for this survey.

Design

Research design is a choice of an investigator about the components of his project and development of certain components of the design. A design of research does not consist of an order sequential step by step procedure. It is a planning stage of research components that is done keeping in view the objectives and hypothesis of the research. The present study was a descriptive survey in nature. It was conducted on a selected sample from school teachers of Ludhiana district.

Result and Interpretation

Table 1 Significance of the Difference between Mean Scores of the variable of Right to Information (RTI) Awareness among Male and Female School Teachers (N = 100)

Group	N	M	S.D	SE _M	t-value
Male	17	5.24	3.65	0.89	2.82**
Female	83	8.96	5.18	0.57	

significant at 0.01 level

Table 1 revealed that the mean scores of the variable of Right to Information (RTI) awareness among male and female school teachers as 5.24 and 8.96 respectively and their standard deviation as 3.65 and 5.18 respectively. The t-ratio is 2.82 with $d_f=198$ which is significant at 0.01 level of confidence. This revealed that a significant difference exists between mean scores of the variable of Right to Information (RTI) awareness among male and female school teachers.

Hence hypothesis 1 stating that ‘There exists no significant difference in Right to Information (RTI) awareness among male and female school teachers,’ is rejected.

As the mean score of female school teachers is higher than that of male school teachers, therefore, it may also be concluded that female school teachers are significantly more aware about Right to Information (RTI) than their male counterparts.

Table 2 Significance of the Difference between Mean Scores of the variable of Right to Information (RTI) Awareness among More than 5 years of service and Up to 5 years of service of School Teachers (N = 100)

Group	N	M	S.D	SE _M	t-value
More than 5 years of service	70	9.86	5.02	0.60	5.08**
Up to 5 years of service	30	4.77	3.38	0.62	

**significant at 0.01 level

Table 2 revealed that the mean scores of the variable of Right to Information (RTI) awareness among More than 5 years of service and Up to 5 years of service of school teachers as 9.86 and 4.77 respectively and their standard deviation as 5.02 and 3.38 respectively. The t-ratio is 5.08 with $d_f=198$ which is significant at 0.01 level of confidence. This revealed that a significant difference exists between mean scores of the variable of Right to Information (RTI) awareness among More than 5 years of service and Up to 5 years of service school teachers.

Hence hypothesis 2 stating that ‘There exists no significant difference in Right to Information (RTI) awareness among More than 5 years of service and Up to 5 years of service school teachers,’ is rejected. As the mean score of More than 5 years of service school teachers is higher than that of Up to 5 years of service school teachers, therefore, it may also be concluded that More than 5 years of service school teachers are significantly more aware about Right to Information (RTI) than their Up to 5 years of service counterpart.

Table 3 Summary of One-way ANOVA on Right to Information (RTI) Awareness among School Teachers with respect to the Qualification of Teachers (N = 100)

Source of Variation	SS	d_f	MS	F-value
Between Groups	1830.80	2	915.40	113.65**
Within groups	781.31	97	8.06	
Total	2612.11	99		

** Significant at 0.01 level

Table 3 depicts the F-ratio after comparing the groups of school teachers with academic

qualification of under graduate, graduate and post graduate on Right to Information (RTI) awareness. The F-value obtained is 113.65 which is significant at 0.01 level of confidence which leads to the conclusion that school teachers with academic qualification of undergraduate, graduate and postgraduate differ significantly on Right to Information (RTI) awareness among undergraduate, graduate and post graduate school teachers.

Hence hypothesis 3 stating that 'There exists no significant difference in Right to Information (RTI) awareness among undergraduate, graduate and post graduate school teachers,' is rejected.

Further to know which pair of teachers i.e. undergraduate and graduate; graduate and postgraduate; and undergraduate and post graduate post graduate differ significantly, t-test was employed.

Table 4 Significance of the Difference between Mean Scores of the variable of Right to Information (RTI) Awareness among School Teachers in relation to their Qualifications (N = 100)

Group	N	M	S.D	SE _M	t-value
Undergraduate	35	3.29	2.58	0.44	6.40**
Graduate	31	8.26	3.69	0.66	
Undergraduate	35	3.29	2.58	0.44	18.12**
Post graduate	34	13.59	2.11	0.36	
Graduate	31	8.26	3.69	0.66	7.24**
Post graduate	34	13.59	2.11	0.36	

**significant at 0.01 level

Table 4 revealed that

- the mean scores of the variable of Right to Information (RTI) awareness among under graduate and graduate school teachers as 3.29 and 8.26 respectively. The t-ratio is 6.40 with $d_f=98$ which is significant at 0.01 level of confidence. This revealed that a significant difference exists between mean scores of the variable of Right to Information (RTI) awareness among under graduate and graduate school teachers.
- the mean scores of the variable of Right to Information (RTI) awareness among under graduate and post graduate school teachers as

3.29 and 13.59 respectively. The t-ratio is 18.12 with $d_f=98$ which is significant at 0.01 level of confidence. This revealed that a significant difference exists between mean scores of the variable of Right to Information (RTI) awareness among under graduate and post graduate school teachers.

- the mean scores of the variable of Right to Information (RTI) awareness among graduate and post graduate school teachers as 8.26 and 13.59 respectively. The t-ratio is 7.24 with $d_f=98$ which is significant at 0.01 level of confidence. This revealed that a significant difference exists between mean scores of the variable of Right to Information (RTI) awareness among graduate and post graduate school teachers.

Further the above Table indicates that post graduates are most aware school teachers, followed by graduate teachers and the under graduate teachers are least aware about Right to Information (RTI).

Conclusions

- The school teachers as well as male and female school teachers, Up to 5 years of service and More than 5 years of service school teachers as well as under graduate, graduate and post graduate school teachers are normally distributed on the variable of Right to Information (RTI) awareness.
- A significant difference was found between mean scores of the variable of Right to Information (RTI) awareness of male and female school teachers which indicates that male and female school teachers differ significantly on the variable of Right to Information (RTI) awareness. As the mean score of female school teachers is higher than that of male adolescents, therefore, it may also be concluded that female school teachers are significantly more aware about Right to Information (RTI) than their male counterpart.
- A significant difference was found between mean scores of the variable of Right to Information (RTI) awareness of Up to 5 years of service and More than 5 years of service school teachers which indicates that Up to 5

years of service and More than 5 years of service school teachers differ significantly on the variable of Right to Information (RTI) awareness. As the mean score of More than 5 years of service school teachers is higher than that of Up to 5 years of service school teachers, therefore, it may also be concluded that More than 5 years of service school teachers are significantly more aware about Right to Information (RTI) than their Up to 5 years of service counterpart.

4. The school teachers with academic qualification of under graduate, graduate and post graduate differ significantly on Right to Information (RTI) awareness among under graduate, graduate and post graduate school teachers.
5. A significant difference exists between mean scores of the variable of Right to Information (RTI) awareness among under graduate and graduate school teachers with graduate teachers being more aware than their under graduate counterparts.
6. A significant difference exists between mean scores of the variable of Right to Information (RTI) awareness among under graduate and post graduate school teachers with post graduate teachers being more aware than their under graduate counterparts.
7. A significant difference exists between mean scores of the variable of Right to Information (RTI) awareness among graduate and post graduate school teachers with post graduate teachers being more aware than their graduate counterparts.
8. The post graduate are most aware category of school teachers about Right to Information (RTI), followed by graduate teachers and the under graduate teachers are least aware about Right to Information (RTI).

Educational Implications

- For Undergraduates, graduates and post graduates, the graduates and the undergraduates must know the laws that are framed by the constitution of India. They must be aware of it.
- For teachers having upto 5 years of service

should seek more knowledge on Right to Information Act.

- For male teachers, should seek more knowledge on Right to Information Act.

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