

# A Comparative Analysis of Awareness about RTI Act among College Students: A Study of Gurgaon

**Kusum lata**

Extension Lecturer, Department of Political Science  
Government College for Girls Sector-14 (Gurgaon)

**ABSTRACT:** Transparency is a key feature of good governance as well as a sign of true and inclusive democracy. In a democratic state each citizen is like a stakeholder. They must have the right to know what is happening in the government. For Making Indian democracy more inclusive, all citizens should be included in the political process. The RTI Act gave every citizen to right to know what is happening in the society as well as in governmental process. RTI Act was passed in 2005 by Indian legislature to strengthening the democratic ethos of country. Every citizen must know about the procedure and proper use of RTI Act for attaining the same goal. This paper is a modest attempt to study the awareness of procedure involved to use RTI among college students. The paper also tries to analyse and compare the level of awareness about RTI Act among these students. The data has been collected through structured questionnaire from 150 college students studying in three Govt. colleges in Gurgaon. The study findings indicate that students are aware about RTI and they are less concerned with its proper use. The study revealed that there is significant difference between Gender and level of awareness about RTI Act. The study also observed that there is significant difference between locality and level of awareness about RTI Act.

**Keywords:** Democracy, Transparency, RTI Act, Level of Awareness

## INTRODUCTION

Transparency, accountability and active participation of citizen in governmental process are the signatory marks of an inclusive democracy. The Right to information act 2005 is strong weapon in the hands of citizens for the protection of democracy. The foundation of RTI Act is based on the principle that all working procedure of government information should accessible to its citizen. RTI Act facilitates and ensure the active participation common man in governance. Democracy has taken to grass root level by this Act. In a democratic state each citizen is like a stakeholder. They must have the right to know what is happening in the government. For Making Indian democracy more inclusive, all citizens should be included in the political process. The RTI Act gave every citizen right to know what is happening in the society as well as in governmental process. RTI Act was passed in 2005 by Indian legislature to strengthening the democratic ethos of country. Every citizen must know about the procedure and proper use of RTI Act for attaining the same goal. RTI refers to the right of every citizen to access information held by or under the control of public authorities. RTI Act not only promotes transparency, accountability openness, in governmental working procedures, but also helps the active citizen participation in democratic process.

## REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

I review several research works to build an adequate background to the study and further help to guiding this study. Such as **Jain and Khurana (2006)** have a deep insight on the various aspect of Right to Information Act. The book comprehensively explain state wise implementation right to information act and its benefits to the society. The book also explains the constraint faced by RTI applicant as well the problems faced by the authorities supplying the information.

**Angela (2006)** in his book systematically covered the Right to Information Act, 2005. The author comprehensively discussed the issues and challenges thrown by this Act. The writer explained the functions, duties and the powers of RTI regulatory authorities as well as the procedure for requesting of Information.

**Mishra S. (2009)** discusses the scope, issues, different provisions, challenges, strengths and shortfalls of the RTI Act. In his book the author tried to trace the foundation and brief history of Right to Information Act. By using both primary data as well secondary data this book portrays the various aspects of RTI Act.

**P.Chitra and M. Neelambar (2013)** in their research paper explain that how newspaper creates awareness about Right to Information Act among youth.

**Thote, P. (2013)** in his research paper examine the awareness level about RTI act among senior secondary school teachers. Using survey method, the author collected data from 200 senior secondary school teachers from different schools. The study found revealed that the secondary school teachers are moderately aware about RTI and they are less concerned with its proper use.

## OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To study the awareness about procedure involved to use RTI Act among College Students.
2. To study and compare the level of Awareness about RTI Act among College Students

**HYPOTHESES**

1. H0. There is no relationship between Gender and Level of Awareness about RTI act.
2. H0. There is no relationship between Locality and Level of Awareness about RTI act.
3. H0. The level of awareness about the procedure about RTI among college students is very low.

**METHODOLOGY**

The study is descriptive in nature. The study is conducting using survey method. The sampling process started by purposive selection of three Government colleges in Gurgaon namely- Government Girls College Sec-14, Daronacharya Government College and Government College Sec-9. The data has been collected through self-structured questionnaire. All questions were close-ended. Total sample size for the study was 150 students (50 students from each college with respect of equal number of male and female except one which is girls college). Random sampling technique is employed to select the sample population because this technique provides equal opportunities to all to be selected as a representative of the sample population across all disciplines.

**DATA INTERPRETATION**

Table-1 represents age wise and gender wise composition of the respondent. 15 respondents (out of 150) belong to the age group of 16-19 of which 7 are male and 8 are female. 23 of male and 67 of female respondents belong to the age Group of 20-23 years. And a further 20 of male and 9 of female come under the age group of 24-27 and 10 male and 6 female respondents respectively are between the age group of 28 years and above. The data shows that majority of surveyed students (90) belong to 20-23 years age group which is much higher number than other age group.

**Table-1**

Age Groups	Gender		Total
	Male	Female	
16-19 Years	7	8	15
20-23 Years	23	67	90
24-27 Years	20	9	29
28 and above	10	6	16
<b>Total</b>	60	90	150

**Figure -1**

**Awareness about RTI application procedure**

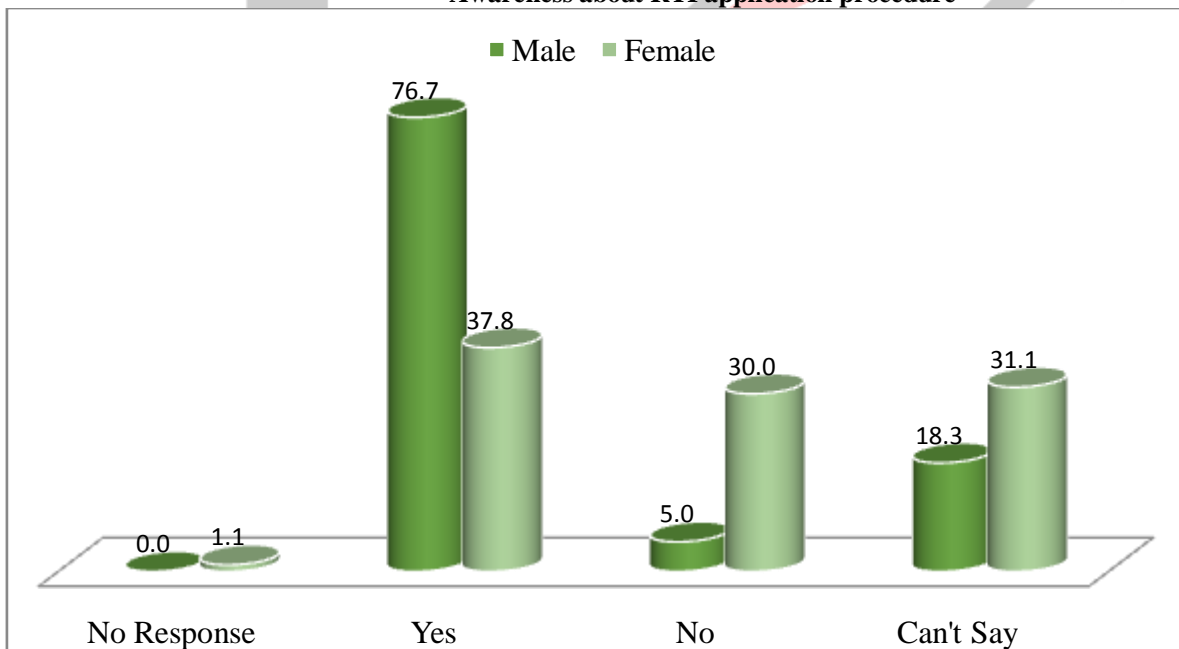
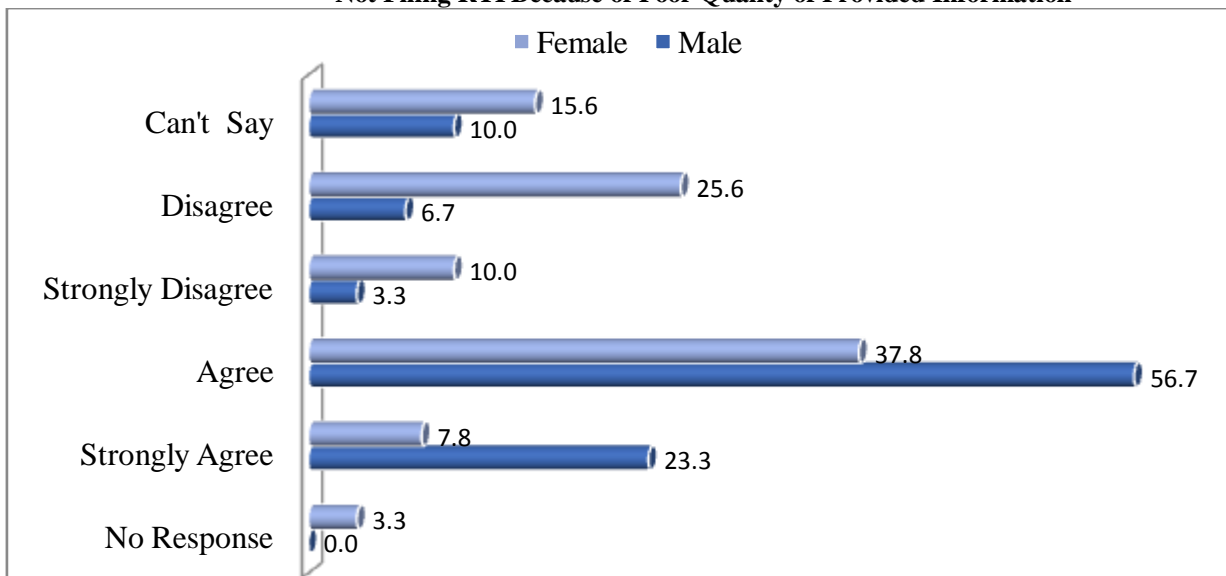


Figure 1 show that 76.7% of male respondents and 37.8% of female respondents are awareness about RTI application procedure while 5.0% of male and 30.0% of female respondents are not aware with the same. 18.3% of male and 31.1% of female respondents are know what RTI is but not sure about the RTI filing procedure.

**Figure -2**  
**Not Filing RTI Because of Poor Quality of Provided Information**



The above figure shows that 23.3% of male respondents and 7.8% of female respondents are strongly agree that they are not filing RTI application for accessing information because the quality of information provided by the authority was very low/poor. 56.7% of male and 37.8% of female are also agreeing with the same while 3.3% of male and 10.0% of female strongly deny the statement. 6.7% of male and 25.6% of female disagree with same statement. 10.0% of the male respondent and 15.6% of female respondents are not sure about the quality of information provided. Only 3.3% female respondents have not given the response to this question.

#### **FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION**

As per field study, the findings indicates that first null hypothesis is rejected which shows that there is signification and positive a relationship between Gender and Level of Awareness about RTI act. The study found that majority of female respondents heard about whatis RTI Act but they don't know how to operationalising the same. In comparison of their female counterpart male respondents are more aware about how to use RTI. However it is observed that female students have comparatively correct information about RTI because they learn about RTI act through text books. But a huge majority of female respondents never use RTI act to access information.

The second null hypothesis is also rejected which shows that there is a positive relationship between Locality and Level of Awareness about RTI act. The study observed that the students belongs to rural areas are less aware about the procedure of RTI in comparison of students who belongs to urban areas.

The third null hypothesis is partially accepted. The study revealed that the level of awareness about the procedure of RTI act is moderate.

The study observed that majority of students have major sources of awareness about the procedure of RTI were TV channel, newspaper and their friend circle.

Due to the cost of information for general candidate 52% of respondents accepts that they never file RTI to access information. Majority of the respondents were not aware that there is no application fee for citizens who are below the poverty line to get information under RTI Act.

Majority of respondents agree with the fact that they sometimes use RTI to access information regarding their class examination failure, scholarship, internal assessment etc. but due to administrative reason or threatening in the name of cutting their name from the institution they are forced to take back their application. And if someone not taking it back, they resend the application again and again for minor reasons to RTI filing candidate to mentally pressurise them.

Majority of respondents (56.7%) agreeing with the statement that they are not filing RTI because the information provided by the authorities was very poor. It may be due to lack of knowledge and indifferent attitude to the authorities engaged in providing information under RTI Act.

**LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY:**

The study tries to cover various feasible aspects; however, it has several limitations. The research work is done under considerable limitations of time and resources. So the study is limited to 60 college students which restrict the scope of generalisation of findings. Most of the study subjects put tick mark against more than one answer without understanding the notion. Some respondents consulted with each other while answering the questionnaire.

On the questionnaires, some respondents were reluctant to share personal information and also in some cases it was difficult to establish that the respondents were truthful in their answers. There are number of variables which may significantly affect the level of awareness of the respondents about RTI like some socio-economic status, intellectual level, and maturity level and so on. But it is not possible to analyse such variables. Since the questions were standardized, it was not possible to explain the questions to the respondents, therefore respondents understand and interpret the questions based on their own context hence there was a possibility of subjectivity. There is also a chance that the respondents could have been forgetful when answering some questions hence omitted some relevant data.

**REFERENCES**

Guhan S. (1997) Corruption in India – Agenda for action, Vision Books, New Delhi.

Jain and Khurana (2006) sourcebook on Right to Information, Kanishka Publishers, Delhi

Mishra S. (2009) Right to Information and Rural Development in India, New Century Publications, New Delhi

P.Chitra and M. Neelamalar (2013) Right to Information (RTI) Act and Youth: A Study on the Impact of Newspaper among Youth, ZENITH International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research ISSN 2231-5780 Vol.3 Issue 7.

Prashant Thote (2013) Study of Awareness of Awareness about Right to Information (RTI) Act among Senior Secondary School Teachers in Central India Reviews of Literature, ISSN:-2347-2723 Volume 1, Issue 5

Wadia A. (2006) Global Sourcebook on Right to Information, 1st ed., Kanishka Publishers and Distributors, New Delhi

