

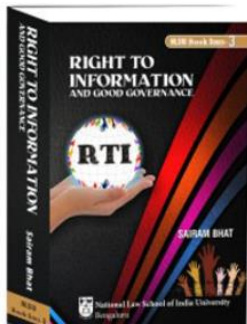
RIGHT TO INFORMATION AND GOOD GOVERNANCE

Transparency in governance and access to information are pivotal to the functioning of a democracy. In the present day and age, when information has been recognised as an essential facet of human life, access to crucial data be it through reports, documents, etc is *sine qua non* to the fulfilment of the right to a wholesome and dignified life. In this context, this course seeks to provide a comprehensive learning on the Right to Information by delving into varied facets of this right. From mapping the constitutional contours of the right to information to understanding the statutory prescriptions as under the Right to Information Act, 2005 and other allied laws, this course will provide a comprehensive overview of the theme of discussion. To throw light on the jurisprudential and evolutionary aspects of the right to information in the overall scheme of governance, the course will also explicate the executory right through administrative and judicial processes.

As the course is designed to primarily elucidate the legal framework on the right to information in India, the course by and large delves into the rights, remedies, exceptions, institutional framework and procedural compliances under the Right to Information Act, 2005 and the Rules. More specifically, it will also discuss important case laws that have shaped the law on the right to information in India. This segment of the course has been specifically included to lay emphasis on judicial interventions in and contributions to shaping the law on the right to information in India. The discussion on the case laws is aimed to throw light on basic questions which are of fundamental importance to the citizenry such as which institutions are accountable to provide information under the definition of ‘Public Authority’? Whether information can be provided to non-citizens? What is the content of the ‘right to Information’? What kind of information is exempted? Increasingly, the Courts have been called upon to interpret various provision of this Act, hence the case law development have contributed enormously to the jurisprudence of transparency law in India.

Additionally, to give a comprehensive overview of the freedom of information the Course traces the legal development of the ‘right of information’ in comparative jurisdictions such as Sri Lanka, the EU, the USA and the UK, by discussing the laws in these jurisdictions and relevant lessons for the India.

The course has been structured to offer the audience an understanding of the theoretical underpinnings of the right to information in India, by covering the historical, jurisprudential, constitutional and statutory aspects of this right. Furthermore, the course also offers insights



into the procedural aspects of filing RTI applications, preferring appeals and manner of exercising the right to information under the law in force. As one of the main objectives of the course is to train practitioners and other interested audiences in the application-based approach to learning the law, the course also provides practical outlooks on enforcing the right to information and implementing the RTI Act and Rules.

The structure and design of the course has been formulated bearing in mind the expertise garnered by CEERA, NLSIU through scholarly research, training and capacity building in the area of right to information and good governance. As a professor at the nation's premier law school, Prof. Sairam Bhat and his team has taken intensive elective courses on Transparency and Right to Information and has also been engaged in offering customised courses and providing training to DOPT Training for Information Commissioners, National Productivity Council, Vizag Steel, Administrative Training Institute, Fiscal Policy Institute, NADT, NACIN, IGNSA, Officers of State Administrative Services, GIPARD, Central Silk Board and other public service utilities. Additionally, Prof. Sairam Bhat has regularly led and partaken in discussion forums on Right to Information including having conducted several workshops, seminars and webinar on “Right to Information: Practice and Procedure”



LEARNING OUTCOMES:

Upon completing the course, the learner will have a comprehensive and holistic understanding of the following thematic areas:

- Historical background to the legal framework on the right to information
- Theoretical and jurisprudential underpinnings of the right to information within the context of democratic governance
- Statutory and legal framework of right to information in India
- Rights, duties and remedies *vis-à-vis* freedom of information in India
- Constitutional contours of the right to information in India
- Institutional mechanism for implementing the RTI Act in India

- Practical procedures for enforcing the right to information in India including process of applying for RTIs, filing appeals under the RTI Act and approaching appropriate authorities.

International and comparative perspectives of the freedom to information and the right to information.