



Teacher-Trainees' Awareness Regarding Right to Information

KEYWORDS

Teacher-Trainee; Awareness; Right to Information.

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ABSTRACT Numerous administrative developments were pitched in under the political and bureaucratic leadership marking a new awakening for free India. The RTI Act 2005 which got massive encouragement from all quarters grants the citizenry the right to access records held by the public authorities. The 21st century learners and teachers are encouraged to instill the values and morals with which democratic process in India get strengthened. However, this write-up examines the awareness among teacher-trainees regarding Right to Information Act 2005. An analysis of the data reveals that only 10% teacher-trainees were found to have high awareness level while 31.66% with low awareness regarding Right to Information. The investigator concludes that 58.33% teacher-trainees were found to have moderate level of awareness regarding Right to Information and that no significant differences were found between i) male and female teacher-trainees and ii) science and social science teacher-trainees, but differed significantly between iii) urban and rural teacher-trainees @ 0.05 level.

Overview

The Indian democratic republic expands its jurisdiction by infusing RTI Act, 2005 which says "...democracy requires an informed citizenry and transparency of information which are vital to its functioning and also to contain corruption and to hold Governments and their instrumentalities accountable to the governed". As a revolutionary step to promote transparency and accountability and above all to strengthen the democratic process, the Right to Information Act 2005 mandates timely response to Indian citizens' requests for government information. The Government of India strives to make the lives of its citizens empowering and resourceful and in order to ensure the utilization of resources in a transparent and democratic way the RTI has been established. The Act simply confers right to all its citizens to know as to how the taxpayers' money is being utilized by the government machinery. With growing political and social awareness, impact of worldwide visual media, and increasing articulation by people, there is a rightful clamour for the need to show a sense of accountability not only on the part of individuals holding political and public offices, but also on the part of other private citizens and institutions, singly or collectively exercising power on behalf of the people or in their name (Chaturvedi, T.N., 2012, pp.09). The Right to Information, now-a-days, is considered as a vital component of democratic process of any sovereign state. One of the main instruments to check corruption in public life is to ensure greater openness in the decision making process (Hota, P.C., 2011, pp.523).

Right to Information Act 2005

At the turn of the 21st century, the much public discourse on the issue of vital concern i.e. Right to Information galvanized the national leadership for the first time with heightened intensity never witnessed in post-independence India. Under the provisions of the Act, any citizen may request information from a "public authority" (a body of Government or "instrumentality of state") which is required to reply expeditiously or within thirty days (Wikipedia, 2012, pp.01). In the context, the right to information as commonly understood is 'the right to access the information and thus, the access to Right to Information Act 2005 grants the citizenry the right to access records held by the public authorities. It was not mere a quest for information that impelled the parliamentarians for a new and separate legislation; it was the country's political leadership backed by masses to introduce and establish much sought after administrative reforms on the part

of public authorities.

Bringing information to the citizens "Right to Information Act 2005 mandates timely response to citizen requests for government information. It is an initiative taken by Department of Personnel and Training, Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions to provide a-RTI Portal Gateway to the citizens for quick search of information on the details of first Appellate Authorities, PIOs etc. amongst others, besides access to RTI related information / disclosures published on the web by various Public Authorities under the government of India as well as the State Governments" (source: [www. http://rti.gov.in/](http://rti.gov.in/)).

RTI came into force in India on 12th October, 2005. The Right to Information Act is the most empowering act in recent times (Tolia, R.S., 2006). Laying the foundation of the country's democratic process, the very Act provides for setting out the practical regime of right to information for citizens. Education contributes to the multifaceted development of the individuals by way of endowing them with the means and measures to improving their knowledge base, skills and capability to work. Therefore, learning the national issues in this backdrop is getting momentum. In the present paper, an analysis is made on the awareness among teacher-trainees regarding Right to Information with respect to their gender, locale and stream of studies.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the paper are:

- to study the awareness level among teacher-trainees regarding Right to Information,
- to analyze the significant difference, if any, in the awareness of Right to Information among teacher-trainees with regard to their gender,
- to find out the significant difference, if any, in the awareness of Right to Information among teacher-trainees with regard to their locale, and
- to analyze the significant difference, if any, in the awareness of Right to Information among teacher-trainees with regard to their stream of studies,

Hypotheses

- the teacher-trainees have significantly high level of awareness regarding Right to Information,
- there is no significant difference between the awareness

of male and female teacher-trainees regarding Right to Information,

- there is no significant difference between the awareness of urban and rural teacher-trainees regarding Right to Information, and
- there is no significant difference between the awareness of science and social science teacher-trainees regarding Right to Information.

Design of the Study

The methodology employed for the present investigation was descriptive wherein the data was collected through survey technique. The awareness regarding Right to Information among teacher-trainees at secondary level teacher education with respect to their gender, locale and stream of studies were analyzed.

Sample Size

Keeping the objectives in view, a total of 60 of which 38 (63.33%) teacher-trainees belonging to social science stream and 22 (36.66%) teacher-trainees with science stream enrolled under one year full - time secondary teacher education programme at Maulana Azad National Urdu University, Hyderabad were selected using simple random sampling technique. The sample consists of 35 (58.33%) male and 25 (41.66%) female teacher-trainees.

Tools

The present study was carried out with the help of a questionnaire based on multiple choice items developed by the investigator. The tool consists of 25 items covering the different aspects of right to information contained in the Right to Information Act 2005, Govt. of India. The tool was administered and subsequently data was gathered from the subjects under investigation. Necessary instructions to the subjects were also given to seek free and frank responses.

Data Analyses

Scores were calculated based on the multiple choice responses to all items contained in the tool. The responses were recorded on the questionnaire-cum-answer sheets and the data was analyzed and interpreted with the help of statistical techniques i.e. percentage, Mean, Standard Deviation and t-test. And finally, inferences were drawn with all objectivity and emotional detachment.

Findings

On the basis of the discussions and interpretations of the results, the following findings have been emerged out of the study:

Table – I: Teacher-Trainees’ Awareness Level regarding Right to Information

Sl. No.	Criteria	Level	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	≥ 61%	High	6	10.00
2	46% - 60%	Moderate	35	58.33
3	≤ 45%	Low	19	31.66
Total			60	100

Table - I shows the percentage of frequencies of the teacher-trainees’ awareness level regarding Right to Information as high, moderate and low.

Diagram Showing the Percentage of Teacher-Trainees’ Awareness Level

The figure above shows that 10.00% teacher-trainees have high awareness level, 58.33% have moderate while 31.66% are found to have low awareness level regarding Right to Information.

The data gathered for analysis and interpretation was properly arranged to apply suitable statistics and the significance of the observed differences between means were tested with t-test.

Table – II: Significance of Difference between Mean Scores of Teacher-Trainees: Gender, Locale and Stream-wise

Group of Teacher-trainees		N	df	Mean	SD	Calculated t-value	Inference
Gender	Male	35	58	12.11	2.41	0.36	Not Significant @ 0.05 level
	Female	25		11.88	2.99		
Locale	Urban	20	58	13.23	2.93	3.16	Significant @ 0.05 level
	Rural	40		10.77	2.67		
Stream	Science	22	58	11.42	2.98	1.53	Not Significant @ 0.05 level
	Social Science	38		12.56	2.37		

Table - II reveals that the mean scores of male teacher-trainees’ awareness are 12.11, and female teacher-trainees are 11.88 regarding Right to Information. The t-value calculated (0.36) is found to be less than the table value (2.00) at 0.05 significance level. Hence, the null hypothesis (H₀) is accepted and can be inferred that ‘there is no significant difference in the awareness regarding Right to Information between male and female teacher-trainees’.

It also indicates that the mean score of urban teacher-trainees regarding awareness of Right to Information is (13.23) greater than the rural teacher-trainees (10.77). The t-value calculated (3.16) is found to be higher than the table value (2.00) at 0.05 significance level. Hence, the null hypothesis (H₀) is rejected and alternative hypothesis that ‘there will be significant difference in the awareness regarding Right to Information between urban and rural teacher-trainees’, and that the urban teacher-trainees are more aware regarding Right to Information than their rural counterparts.

The table reveals that the mean score of science teacher-trainees regarding awareness of Right to Information (11.42) is less than that of the social science teacher-trainees (12.56). But the t-value obtained for the significance of the scores of teacher-trainees belonging to science and social science teacher-trainees is found to be 1.53 which is lower than the required table value at 0.05 significance level. Hence, the null hypothesis (H₀) is accepted. Therefore, it is concluded that there exists no significant difference in the awareness of science and social science teacher-trainees regarding Right to Information.

Conclusion

The study helps the investigator to understand that the majority of teacher-trainees have moderate level of awareness regarding Right to Information. As per the data, locale has significant impact in the teacher-trainees’ awareness regarding Right to Information while gender and stream have no significant impact on their awareness regarding Right to Information. The teacher-trainees irrespective of gender, locale and stream of studies need to get more information and knowledge regarding Right to Information and convey the same among their target learning groups. On the basis of the power enacted and disseminated about Right to Information Act, the awareness level may be strengthened thereby instilling democratic values and transparency morals in the younger generation.

Educational Implications

On the basis of results obtained from the present study several educational implications can be derived; a few of them are outlined below:

- study regarding Right to Information Act be included as a part of resourceful learning activity in the school curriculum.

- Rural teacher-trainees of secondary teacher education programme have to be specially made aware about the Right to Information Act for the benefit of the various socio-economic, political and educational contexts.
- It is high time to encourage the study of Right to Information Act in all academic endeavours to empower and benefit the ever increasing learning groups.

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