

Occupational Differences among RTI Users: An Exploratory Study

Deepak Sharma

Research Scholar,
Department of Social Work,
Janardan Rai Nagar University,
Udaipur, Rajasthan

Dr. Naval Singh Rajput

Associate Professor,
Department of Social Work,
Janardan Rai Nagar University,
Udaipur, Rajasthan

Abstract

Background- Right to information act is one of the basic tools for connecting people to the government. This great initiative has open up the new dimensions of democracy in this present era of good governance. The Phenomenon- The RTI has served as an instrument of social work. Review of literature indicated that there is a significant contribution of RTI act for the enhancement of social work. Purpose- Present paper aims to critically evaluate the issues related to explore the Right to Information Act in terms of Social Upliftment, to explore the gender differences among the RTI users, to explore the occupational differences among the RTI users, to explore the educational differences among the RTI users. Methodology- The exploratory research design was employed in the present research work. For the present study RTIs for the social upliftment were selected through purposive random sampling in the time period from 2006 to 2015 i.e. ten years from the implementation of RTI. Statistical analysis was done by doing the content analysis of the selected studies which were screened out on the basis of their motive of social welfare and upliftment. Results- The study revealed that (i) 44% RTIs were related to the issues concerned with the social upliftment and 56% were related to the other reasons such as personal,(ii) 46.9% male RTI users and 39% of female RTI users, (iii) 40% Social activist, 36% of journalist, 14% of lawyers and 10% others were RTI users.

Keywords: Social Upliftment, Right to Information RTI, Social Welfare

Introduction

Right to information act was introduced by the government of India to achieve the goal of transparency in communication with common man in order to achieve the goal of good governance. This act no doubt became an instrument for smooth two way communication.

Transparency and accountability in administration is the sign of participatory democracy. Information is the oxygen that any citizen needs to live in the social structure of the society and maintain its democratic balance.

RTI has brought revolutionary changes in Indian democracy. (Singh, 2010) RTI act has provided a platform for the global explosion of freedom of information. (Sharma,) Right to information is a tool for combating corruption in India. (Chetan, 2017) RTI is essential to understand the proper democracy of the nation. (Choudhary, 2011) Right to information has not yet gained the level for which it was created. (Batana, 2020)

The proposed study aims to explore the unsung dimensions of RTI, as an agent for the social upliftment. The present research will put forth the idea of more effective use of RTI for the betterment of the society. This novel initiative of government of India has a significant contribution in smoothing the two way communication between the government and the common man. Hence the present research was proposed with the motive of exploring the more social dimensions connected with RTI.

Objective of the study

Primary Objectives

- (a) To explore the Right to Information Act in terms of Social Upliftment.
- (b) To explore the gender differences among the RTI users.
- (c) To explore the occupational differences among the RTI users.
- (d) To explore the educational differences among the RTI users.

Secondary Objective

- (e) To explore the barriers for using the RTI and suggesting the strategies to overcome the barriers.

Research Methodology

The exploratory research design was employed in the present research work. The present study was done with available secondary data. For the present study RTIs for the social upliftment were selected through purposive random sampling in the time period from 2006 to 2015 i.e. ten years from the implementation of RTI. Records were analyzed on the basis of the primary and secondary objectives.

Statistical Analysis

Statistical analysis was done by doing the content analysis

of the selected studies which were screened out on the basis of their motive of social welfare and upliftment. Pie charts were prepared for the better graphical representations of the different trends of the analyzed data.

Results & Discussion

To explore the Right to Information Act in terms of Social Upliftment.

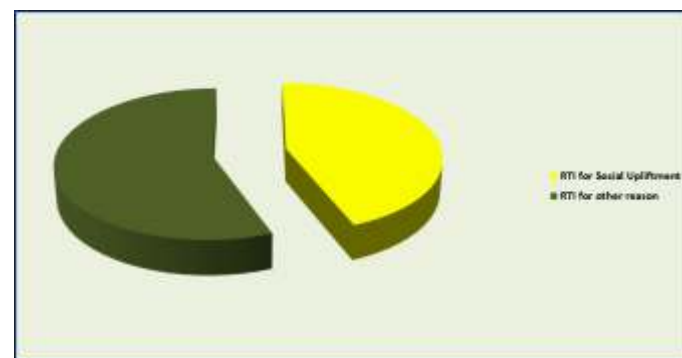
In order to find out the percentage of the RTIs used for the social upliftment, the information was gathered and it was found as shown in Table- 1 that 44% RTIs were related to the issues concerned with the social upliftment and 56% were related to the other reasons such as personal. Figure 1 depicts about the difference in percentage of responses recorded as per the objective of segregation of the RTIs on the basis of their objective of social upliftment or other. The pie charts presents the more clear picture.

Table-1

Right To Information Act in terms of Social Upliftment

RTI Classification	RTI for Social Upliftment	RTI for other reason
% of Responses	44%	56%

Right To Information Act in terms of Social Upliftment



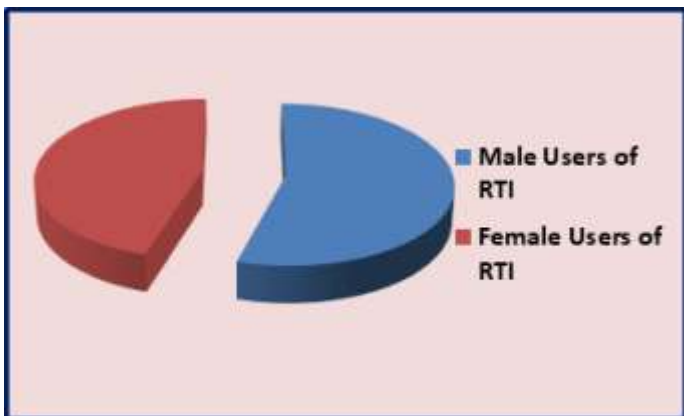
To explore the gender differences among the RTI users.

The second primary objective was to analysis the gender differences among the RTI users. The similar methodology was used and the data indicates that there were more male RTI users. Table 2 indicates that there were 46.9% male RTI users and 39% of female RTI users. The Figure 2 indicates the above discussed trends of the data.

Table-2
Gender differences among the RTI users

Gender	Male RTI Users	Female RTI Users
% of rponses	46.9%	39%

Figure-2
Gender differences among the RTI users



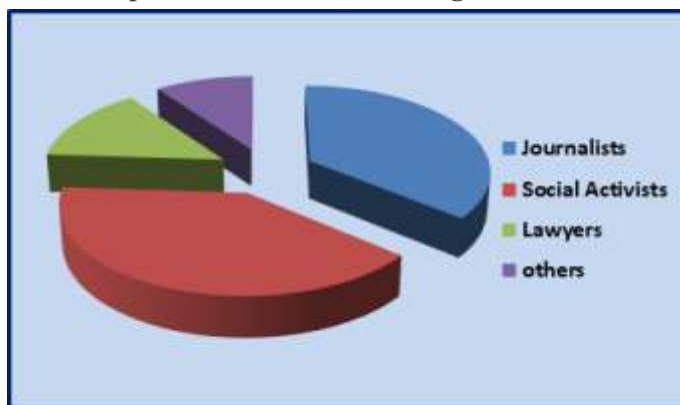
To explore the occupational differences among the RTI users.

The third primary objective was to analyze the occupational differences among the RTI users. The similar methodology was used and the data indicates that there are difference among the different occupation of RTI users. Table 3 indicates that 40% Social activist, 36% of journalist, 14% of lawyers and 10% others were RTI users. The Figure 3 indicates the above discussed trends of the data.

Table-3
Occupational differences among the RTI users

Occupation	Journalists	Social Activists	Lawyers	Others
% of responses	36%	40%	14%	10%

Figure-3
Occupational differences among the RTI users

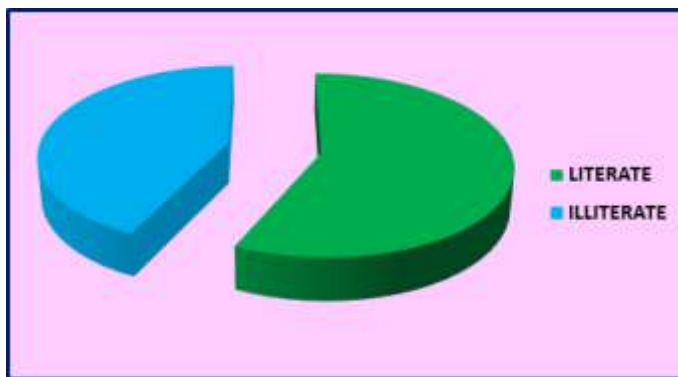


To explore the educational differences among the RTI users
The last primary objective was to analysis the educational differences among the RTI users. The data was analyzed and found that literate individuals used RTI more. Table 4 indicates that there were 57% literate RTI users and 43% of illiterate RTI users. The Figure 4 indicates the above discussed trends of the data.

Table-4
Educational differences among the RTI users

Educational Status	Literate	Illiterate
% of responses	57%	43%

Figure-4
Educational differences among the RTI users



Secondary Objective

To explore the barriers for using the RTI and suggesting the strategies to overcome the barriers-

The secondary objective was to analyze the problems in the form of barriers which hinders the users to go for the RTI and get benefited from it. On the basis of the analysis of the studied RTIs the following barriers were observed:-



Figure: Model presentation of PROBLEM in usage of RTI

- Though the RTI is publicized by the government very widely but still there are many individuals who have not even heard of it.
- RTIs procedure is perceived by many individuals as difficult.
- There is lot of misguidance during the processing.
- Generally complete and desired information is not available.
- Incomplete and irrelevant information are provided from the concerned departments
- RTI accused faces so many problems of incorporation
- Whole procedure of RTI creates dissatisfaction for the system
- Processing charges are expensive it not free of cost for the common man

- The RTI users generally receives threats from others
- Many departments are not covered under RTI regulation.

Strategies to overcome these barriers

- There should be more awareness campaign for enhancing the number RTI beneficiaries.
- The online facilities available for using RTI should be more users friendly.
- Misguidance of RTI users should be checked.
- There should be provision of penalty on not providing the proper information.
- More departments should be added in the criteria of RTI so as to achieve the goal of good governance.

Conclusion

Hence the above critical analysis indicates that the RTI is a beneficiary tool for the upliftment of society but some strategies should be applied to overcome the existing barriers.

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