
UNIT-21 TRANSPARENCY AND RIGHT TO INFORMATION

Structure

- 21.0 Learning Outcome
- 21.1 Introduction
- 21.2 Transparency and Right to Information
- 21.3 Right to Information: An International Perspective
- 21.4 Right to Information: The Indian Scenario
- 21.5 Right to Information Act 2005: Main Features
- 21.6 Implementing Right to Information: Tasks Ahead
- 21.7 Conclusion
- 21.8 Key Concepts
- 21.9 References and Further Reading
- 21.10 Activities

21.0 LEARNING OUTCOME

After reading this Unit, you should be able to:

- Explain the relationship between transparency and right to information
- Examine the right to information in an international perspective
- Appreciate the efforts made in India towards right to information
- Bring out the main features of Right to Information Act 2005;and
- Discuss the tasks ahead in the operationalisation of right to information

21.1 INTRODUCTION

You are by now familiar with the concepts of governance and good governance, which we have discussed at length in this Course as well as in Course 011 of this Programme.

Ours is an age of deepening and expansion of democracy. The role of people in the governance process is now receiving universal attention, not simply as an occasional voter, but as an active participant in the regular and day-to-day governance especially at the local and decentralised level. It is in this train of thinking that 'accountability' as well as 'transparency and information' - two of the important aspects of 'governance' have been identified in the 1992 World Bank document on *Governance and Development*. The citizen's right to information is increasingly being recognised as an important instrument to promote openness, transparency and accountability in public administration. The citizens, the stakeholders, the consumers of public services, the beneficiaries of development programmes, the civil society organisations, the business and commercial houses – all, it is being universally acknowledged, must get the information they require from the public authorities relating to their administration, operations or decisions. This is only possible, if the administration is accountable and transparent enough and provides them with information on their aims, policies and programmes. This Unit, focuses on the pertinence of the need for right to information and how things can be improved in this regard. It examines on the international and national perspectives on the issue.

21.2 TRANSPARENCY AND RIGHT TO INFORMATION

The symbiotic relationship between sin and secrecy is now universally recognised. It was Max Weber, the theorist of bureaucracy, who was the first to point out that 'secrecy', is an 'invention' of the bureaucracy in the interest of 'power'. Firstly, there is considerable evidence now to suggest that a government, which operates in greater secrecy, is more prone to corruption as compared to a government, which operates in greater openness. This is why, the right to information is considered as a significant step in empowering people to combat state corruption. Secondly, the right to information helps to strengthen the foundations of democracy. Unlike a totalitarian government, a democratic government needs to be based on the trust of the governed. It should therefore, function in public view as much as possible so that the citizens know about its aims, policies and programmes and help the government to accomplish them. Maximum secrecy in governmental functioning, on the contrary, would tend to promote corruption, oppression, nepotism and misuse or abuse of authority, and thereby, alienate the government from the governed. To reiterate the words of the Franks Committee of the United Kingdom (1972), "A government which pursues secret aims, or which operates in greater secrecy than the effective conduct of its proper functions require, or which turns information services into propaganda agencies, will lose the trust of the people. It will be countered by ill-informed and destructive criticism". Information is vital for making the government responsive to public needs.

Openness or transparency in governmental functioning is, therefore, regarded as an essential ingredient of democracy and the right to information as a fundamental democratic right. Thirdly, democracy, to be effective and meaningful, should also have responsive administration (already discussed in Unit 20), which is a bilateral process. On the one side, administration is required to be citizen-centric, which implies that it should be responsive to the citizens' legitimate needs, aspirations and grievances. The citizens, on the other side, are required to be cooperative and yet vigilant. For, it is the eternal vigilance of enlightened citizens, which facilitates

accountability and prevents arbitrariness in public administration, and brings it closer to the citizens. An eternal and enlightened vigilance is, thus, the best guarantee of democratic government. There is no denying that the right to know is an effective means for the citizens' enlightenment. For, it is this right, which gives them access to government departments and documents and thereby enables them to acquire knowledge of what is happening in the government.

Fourthly, the right to information tends to remove unnecessary secrecy surrounding the decision-making process in the government, and thereby helps to improve the quality of decision making in public policy and administration. It enables the citizens to know about the government decisions and the basis on which they are made so that they can exercise sound judgement on the merits of public policies and respond appropriately to influence the process of policy formulation and decision-making in public governance. Last but not the least, the right to information is an effective means to strengthen grass roots democracy and ensure people's participation in local governance and development activities. It would also bring the local governments under public scrutiny and thereby help them to avoid "costly mistakes". To quote James Madison, one of the founding fathers of the American Constitution, "a popular government without popular information or means of acquiring it, is but a prologue to a farce or a tragedy or perhaps both."

According to Aruna Roy, 'the right to information touches all levels of governance. If even one per cent of the country uses it, it can shape democracy in the country. Central debates like corruption in public office, corruption in public office, corruption in political parties and the corrupt deals of national governments will all be set against the context of facts' (Lakshman, 2005).

Without information, people cannot adequately exercise their rights and responsibilities of citizens or make informed choices. Government information is a national resource. Neither the particular government of the day nor public officials create information for their own benefit. This information is generated for purposes related to the legitimate discharge of their duties and for the service of the public for whose benefit the institutions of government exist and who ultimately (through one kind of import or another) fund the institutions of government and the salaries of officials. It follows therefore that the government and its officials are merely 'trustees' of this information for the people (Mander, 2003).

21.3 RIGHT TO INFORMATION: AN INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

Sweden was the first country to provide freedom of information to its citizens as far back as 1766. The Constitutional provisions guaranteeing this freedom was adopted in that year, as part of the Freedom of the Press Act, one of Sweden's four basic Constitutional laws. It was the outcome of an "intense struggle" during the last half of the 18th century between the two main political parties of Sweden, the Hats and the Caps. With the defeat of the Hats in 1765 after a long term in office, the Caps inserted the principle of public access in the Freedom of the Press Act as a reaction to their frustration over excessive administrative secrecy as well as press censorship under the Hats regime. Subsequently, the principle was accepted as a part of the "the normal political life of Sweden" (Rowat, 1980).

In other countries, however, the developments in this regard have been far more recent. Among other Scandinavian countries, Finland enacted the Freedom of Information (FOI) legislation in 1951, followed by Denmark and Norway in 1970. The United States enacted its FOI Act in 1966, exactly two hundred years after Sweden. The Act was amended in 1974 to limit the exemptions and to provide for penalties against those government officials who would be found withholding information or treating FOI requests in an arbitrary or capricious fashion. Austria, France and the Netherlands passed this legislation during the 70s, while Australia, Canada and New Zealand enacted it in 1982-83. Various states or provinces of the United States, Canada and Australia have also enacted their own FOI legislations.

In Bulgaria, the Access to Information Act was enacted in June 2000. The scope of its applicability is wide, since the term "public information", under the act, has been construed to mean "any information relating to social life", which gives the citizens an opportunity to form their own opinion about the activities of the persons obligated to provide information. The Act gives the right of access to information not only to the citizens but also to the non-citizens as well as the legal entities.

Ireland enacted the FOI Act in 1997, which came into force in 1998. In the Republic of South Africa, the Right of Access to Information is a Constitutional right, which has been further reinforced with the Promotion of Access to Information Act, 2000. The objectives of the act, inter alia, include promotion of a culture of human rights and social justice, imparting accountability and good governance and enabling public participation in decision making by public bodies that affect their rights. The Act contains two separate parts, each dealing with the right of access to records of public bodies and private bodies respectively.

The Japanese law concerning the Disclosure of Information held by administrative organs is applicable to defined "administrative organs". It seeks to ensure that the government is accountable to the people for its various operations, and contributes to the promotion of a fair and democratic administration that is subject to the people's accurate understanding and criticism. Thailand enacted its Official Information Act in 1997. It is a very short legislation and lacks clarity on certain important aspects, such as the procedure for receiving and processing of information requests and the appeal and complaint procedures (Shankari, 2000).

In Britain, a White Paper called 'Your Right to Know' was published in 1997 and three years later, on 30 November 2000, the Freedom of Information Act received the Royal Assent. The Freedom of Information Act 2000, requires each of the public authorities to adopt and maintain a publication scheme whose purpose is to specify the classes of information that the authority publishes or intends to publish, the form in which this is or will be done; and whether there is any charge for the information. Each scheme must be approved by the information commissioner who is an independent public official responsible directly to parliament.

On the whole, the FOI legislations in developed democracies have three fundamental features:

- A legal right of access to government records without a demonstrated need to know;

- Specific exemptions to protect national security, personal privacy, law enforcement and the like; and
- Where access is refused, a right of appeal independent of government officials (Bell and Watchirs, 1988).

21.4 RIGHT TO INFORMATION: THE INDIAN SCENARIO

In India, the first political commitment to the citizen's Right to Information came up on the eve of the Lok Sabha elections in 1977 as a corollary to public resentment against suppression of information, press censorship and abuse of authority during the internal emergency of 1975-77. In its election manifesto of 1977, the Janata Party promised "an open government", and declared that it would not misuse the intelligence services and governmental authority for personal and partisan ends". Pursuant to this commitment, the Janata government headed by Morarji Desai constituted in 1977, a working group to ascertain if the Official Secrets Act, 1923, could be modified so as to facilitate greater flow of information to the public. The working group comprising officials from the Cabinet Secretariat and the Ministries of Home Affairs, Finance and Defence, which laboured for months only to recommend that the Act of 1923 should be retained without change. This 'no change' recommendation was far from popular expectations. The very composition of the group, however, was indicative of the kind of recommendation made by it. The bureaucracy by its nature revels in secrecy, and hence, any other kind of recommendation would have been an exception. The country was ultimately back to 1923 that is to 'square one', as it was contented to regulate its communication system with "We, the People of India", along the network of the colonial Official Secrets Act (Maheshwari, 1980).

The events, which helped create political commitment to the Right to Information for the second time, had resemblance with the historical context, out of which the principle of public access to information evolved in Sweden. The National Front government's renewed commitment to this Right was the outcome of the people's frustration over the earlier government's reluctance to part with the information relating to Bofors and other deals (Guha Roy, 1990). In its 1989 Lok Sabha Election Manifesto, the National Front committed itself to "open government", and declared unequivocally that "People's Right to Information shall be guaranteed through constitutional provisions". Reiterating this commitment, the then Prime Minister V.P. Singh, in his first broadcast to the nation in December 1989 said, "We will have to increase access to information. If the government functions in full public view, wrong doings will be minimised. To this end, Official Secrets Act will be amended and we will make the functioning more transparent. Right to Information will be enshrined in our Constitution".

Despite such a strong commitment, there was actually no headway towards transparency and openness in our governmental functioning due to the early fall of the National Front government. The Right to Information movement initiated by Aruna Roy in Rajasthan has been quite successful. A people's organisation called Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sangathan is doing significant work in making the government respond to the demands of information and accountability. Through 'Jan Sunwai' or public hearings, people have been able to speak up and air their grievances to the

government functionaries. In fact, such movements by the people can effectively provide substance to the abstract notion of Right to Information and Transparency (Roy, 2001). The right to information initiated in the State of Rajasthan in 1994, provided an opportunity to the people to demand information on spending in developmental activities, ensure accountability and redressal of grievances. The first Jan Sunwai (Public Hearing) was held in a village of Kotkirana in 1994. It gathered momentum with organising of dharnas in the State of Rajasthan which made the government agree that the people had the right to receive information about expenditure on development works in the villages. Later, a Committee was set up at the Centre under the Chairmanship of Justice P.B. Sawant to draft a model bill to be introduced in the Parliament and the States.

In 1997, the Government of India had set up a Working Group on Right to Information and Promotion of Open and Transparent Government. It was entrusted with the responsibility of examining the feasibility of introducing a Right to Information Act. The working group accepted the following broad principles for the formulation of legislation.

1. Disclosure of information should be the rule and secrecy the exception
2. Exceptions should be clearly defined
3. There should be an independent mechanism for adjudication of disputes between the citizens and public authority (Mathur, 2003). Later the Conference of Chief Ministers held in 1997, in its Action Plan for Effective and Responsive Government at the Central and State levels, reiterated the introduction of legislation on Right to Information, as there is secrecy and lack of transparency in many governmental decision making activities.

Subsequently, the National Agenda for governance of the earlier multi-party coalition i.e., the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) declared: "Our first commitment to the people is to give a stable, honest, transparent, and efficient government capable of accomplishing all-round development. For this the government shall introduce time-bound programme of needed administrative reforms..." In pursuance with this commitment, the NDA government introduced the Freedom of Information (FOI) Bill, 2000 in the Parliament. Till recently, the Bill was under consideration for the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Home Affairs.

Meanwhile, instead of waiting for a central legislation, half a dozen states have enacted their own laws on Right to Information (RTI). These include Goa (1997), Tamil Nadu (1997), Rajasthan (2000), Maharashtra (2000), Karnataka (2000) and Delhi (2001). Besides, Madhya Pradesh has issued wide-ranging administrative directives on dissemination of information upto the level of Gram Panchayats. The Rajasthan RTI Act 2000 clearly lays down the procedure for supply of information grounds on which some information can be withheld, procedure for appeal in case of non-receipt of information etc (<http://www.rajasthan.gov.in>). The Delhi Right to Information Act 2001 also indicates the obligations on public authorities to provide information, procedure for supply of information, restrictions on parting with information etc (www.ar.delhi.govt.nic.in). Interestingly, all the states that have enacted their own RTI laws were non-NDA partners ruled states when the Act was passed. In some of these states, the law though has been too weak. The Tamil Nadu Act, for instance, has imposed more than twenty restrictions on the application of the Right. The Goa and Karnataka Acts, on the other hand, have several good features.

However, in all these states, the concerned citizens and civil society organisations still complain about denial of information on important issues relating to public interest.

The NDA Government's proposed FOI Bill has evoked lot of controversy on various issues. Some of them are notably as follows:

- a) The bill exempts from disclosure “information exchanged in confidence between the central and state governments or any of their authorities or agencies”. It is commonly felt that this is too wide a clause to cover a lot of such information, which should otherwise be available to the people.
- b) A major lacuna of the bill is that it does not specifically provide for penalties against the officials who, in violation of the law, would either refuse to provide information or give false, misleading or incomplete information.
- c) In this age of economic liberalization, when the governments are keen on outsourcing many of their traditional functions to private agencies and allowing foreign direct investments in telecom, power, banking and other major sectors, the bill, however, does not apply to the private sector. In contrast, the South African law enacted in the same year has specifically brought the private sector under its purview so that there could be no disparity between the public sector and the private sector engaged in similar commercial activity.
- d) The most serious shortcoming of the bill lies in that it provides for appeals only within the government bodies. It not only bars jurisdiction of courts but also ensures that no appeal should lie even with an independent body.

It is pertinent to mention that the Supreme Court has already declared that Right to Information is a Fundamental Right and denial of information amounts to violation of the Right to Life. Pursuant to this declaration and also in response to the petitions filed by the Common Cause and the Centre for Public Interest Litigation, the Supreme Court reportedly decided to scrutinise the proposed FOI Bill to ascertain whether the government has given enough power to the citizens to know what they want to about governance. Accordingly, it has adjourned the hearing till January 2003. This is indeed a welcome step against the backdrop of lack of political will to recognise people's right to know. Meanwhile, the FOI bill has been somewhat hurriedly passed by the Lok Sabha on 4th December 2002 without plugging the various loopholes.

The present government had tabled the Right to Information Bill in Parliament on December 23, 2004. The National Advisory Council, (of the present government) had recommended 36 amendments to the Freedom of Information Act 2002 including changing its name to the Right to Information Act, which would emphasise the fundamental nature of the right. This bill excludes state governments, district authorities and local bodies from its purview and restricts the scope only to the central government.

The Parliament has passed the Right to Information Bill on 11th May 2005 with 146 amendments.

21.5 RIGHT TO INFORMATION ACT 2005: MAIN FEATURES

The Right to Information Act 2005 is comprehensive which includes provisions for independent appeals, penalties for non-compliance, proactive disclosure and clarity and simplicity of the access process.

Its main features include:

- **A Broad Definition of Information**

The Act confers a right to “information” rather than just “records” or “documents”. Information includes permitting the inspection of public works. It also covers “information relating to a private body which can be accused by a public authority under any law”.

- **Proactive Disclosure**

The list of information to be proactively published by public authorities is broad. In addition to standard provisions commonly contained in access list, public authorities are to publish: the budget allocated to each agency, including plans, proposed expenditure and respects on disbursements; the manner of execution of subsidy programmes, including the amounts allocated and beneficiaries; recipients of concessions, permits, licenses; and relevant facts while formulating policies.

- **Appointment of Public Information Officers (PIOs)**

The Act provides for the appointment of PIOs in all administrative units/offices as may be necessary to provides information to persons requesting it – Assistant PIOs are also to be appointed at each sub-divisional or sub disbud level. These provisions are designed to bring access closer to the people by ensuring that applicants can submit requests in their local area.

- **Time Limits**

The Act lays down the time limits as thirty days for normal applications and 40 days where a third party submissions is to be called for. In a novel approach, these time limits are reduced to a mere 48 hours where the information sought “concerns the life and liberty of a person”.

- **Fees**

The application fee is to be reasonable and no fee shall be charged for persons who are below the poverty line as determined by the government where a public authority fails to comply with time limits under the Act, the information shall be provided free of charge to them.

- **Information Commissions**

The Act provides for the establishment of new Information Commissions at the Centre and in all the states comprising Chief Information Commissioner and ten Information Commissioners. The Commissions can make any order required to bring about compliance with the law, including release of documents, appointment of PIOs and publication of specified information.

- **Penalties**

Every PIO can be penalised Rs. 250 per day upto a maximum of Rs. 25,000 for not accepting application, delaying information release without reasonable cause, and providing incomplete, incorrect, misleading information.

The Act exempts providing of certain categories of information. These include cabinet papers, information covering a wide range of central intelligence and security agencies and that, which is more than twenty years old etc.

21.6 IMPLEMENTING RIGHT TO INFORMATION: TASKS AHEAD

Experience reveals that mere enactment of FOI legislation would not be enough to provide open and transparent public administration. It would just be the beginning of a long and costly process. The first and foremost task, would be to suitably review and revise such legislations as the Official Secrets Act, 1923, and the Indian Evidence Act 1872, so as to replace the inhospitable or negative provisions therein with suitable provisions, encouraging dissemination of information and limiting the clauses relating to withholding of information. Section 5 of the Official Secrets Act, for example, is regarded as “catch-all provision”, as it covers all kinds of secret official information irrespective of the effect or consequence of disclosure. Again, Section 123 of the Indian Evidence Act provides that no one shall be permitted to give any evidence from unpublished official records, relating to any affairs of the state, except with the permission of the head of the department who shall give or withhold such permission as he or she thinks fit. Even the courts can be denied documents if the government holds that they relate to affairs of the state.

Likewise, the Commission of Enquiry Act, 1952 would also need to be thoroughly scanned and suitably amended so as to make it obligatory for the governments to present the reports of all such commissions before the legislatures within the stipulated time. The amendment should also provide for publication of these reports within a fixed time from the date of presentation in the legislatures. In this context, the following observation of Justice Krishna Iyer (1985), is worth consideration, “When Commissions prolong their enquiries and produce reports, which are shelved for long in government pigeon-holes, matters of public importance suffer, fade-out and the people are stultified by denial of information...” In most such legislations, governments enjoy the option to accept or reject the report, which means that a administration may use Enquiry Commissions as crisis tactics, the end product being conveniently discarded if unfavourable. Thus, unless governments become really interested and wish to prove their bona fides as democracy promoters from the angle of freedom of information, the strategy of constituting Commissions may prove to be informational treachery.

Secondly, in tune with the legislative measures as indicated before, suitable amendments in the conduct rules for government servants would also have to be made

to enable them to disseminate to the people as much information as possible. Rule 11 of the Central Civil Services (Conduct) Rules 1964, for instance, forbids a government servant to communicate to any person, including a fellow government servant, any official document or any part thereof or any information acquired by him during the course of his or her official duties. A violation of this rule will subject the civil servant to disciplinary action over and above punishment under any such law as the Official Secrets Act, 1923. Hence, apart from modification of the conduct rules and the statutes like the Official Secrets Act, specific guidelines concerning dissemination of official information to the public would also have to be laid down and made applicable to all ministries and departments of the central and state governments.

Thirdly, the most challenging task for operationalising the Right to Freedom of Information would be to bring about major changes in our administrative system so as to evolve and facilitate an altogether new culture of openness in place of the existing and age-old culture of secrecy. The revamping of our administrative system in this direction would require multi-pronged measures, which would inter alia include:

- Formulation of a comprehensive training policy with a view to inculcating right attitudes among the public functionaries in the context of open government. Such a training policy would cover all such aspects as identification of training needs for these functionaries at different levels, training of trainers, preparation of training modules and materials for pre-service, in-service and special orientation training courses and periodical evaluation of training designs and methods.
- Introduction of an effective system of reward for enthusiastic service rendered by public functionaries with regard to the dissemination of information as also punishment for those who would be found withholding information in an arbitrary and capricious manner.
- Review and revision of some of the basic concepts of civil services retained since the days of the colonial administration, such as the civil service anonymity.
- Suitable changes in the prevailing practice of classification of government documents so as to put an end to "indiscriminate and unnecessary" classification of information. This calls for a well-planned and enlightened information policy as an important part of government's public relations policy.

Last but not the least, implementation of the Right to Information would require an efficient information management system with the help of sophisticated information technology. The American experience, for instance, reveals that information management is a "multi-faceted process involving the collection, processing, storage, transmission and use of information", and consequently, "the costs of providing information have been significantly higher than Congress anticipated" (Feinberg, 1986). For a developing country such as India, the cost constraints would be much more since our governments will have to bear additional expenses to provide for our weaker groups' accessibility to information relating to various government schemes and programmes for their welfare and development. While acknowledging cost constraints as a genuine problem, the benefits that may be derived from an efficient

system of information management in government departments would also need to be duly assessed and analysed. Moreover, with the increasing use of information technology in our government departments and offices, as we have discussed in Unit 6 of this Course, it should no longer be very difficult in the near future to evolve an effective and useful system of information management in the government.

21.7 CONCLUSION

The mere conferment of the Right to Information without changing the prevalent style of governance would make the entire exercise futile. In the context of our present scenario characterised by the lack of political will and the reluctant attitude of bureaucracy to recognise the people's Right to Information, the role of civil society organisations would be crucial and significant in ushering in a new era of open, transparent and accountable governance. This is more so for a country like India, which has the unique distinction of being the world's largest functional democracy for more than five decades. It is due to the success of our vibrant democracy, albeit aberrations, that a large number of civil society organisations have been playing a catalytic role in various fields of public life. The more these organisations come forward to enlighten and mobilise the people at the grass roots, the more would be the realisation of the immense potential of the Right to Information.

21.8 KEY CONCEPTS

National Advisory Council

It has been set up by the present government under the Chairpersonship of Sonia Gandhi. It functions as an interface with civil society with regard to the implementation of the National Common Minimum Programme (NCMP) of the Government of India. The Council comprises distinguished professionals drawn from diverse fields of development activities. The Council makes recommendations to the government in the areas of priority identified by the NCMP and provides feedback on the impact of the action initiated in various sectors.

Stakeholders

These include various groups who have interest or stake in the governance or functioning of any organisation. It comprises the public, employers, employees, customers and all other interested parties.

21.9 REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Bell, Robin and Helen Watchirs, 1988, "Freedom of Information: The Commonwealth Experience", *Australian Journal of Public Administration*, Vol. 37, No. 4, December.

Feinberg, Lotte E., 1986, "Managing the Freedom of Information Act and Federal Information Policy", *Public Administration Review*, November-December.

Franks Committee Report on Section 2 of the Official Secrets Act, 1911, 1972, Comnd 5104, HMSO, London.

Guha Roy, Jayatilak, 1990, "Open Government and Administrative Culture in India", *Indian Journal of Public Administration*, Vol. 36 No. 3, July-September.

Iyer, V.R. Krishna, 1985, "Freedom of Information: Fundamental to Fundamental Rights", *Popular Jurist*, Nov-December.

Lakshman, Nirmala, 2005, "Information: an inviolable right", *The Hindu*, 21 January.

Maheshwari, Shriram, 1980, "Secrecy in Government in India", in T.N. Chaturvedi (Ed), *Secrecy in Government*, IIPA, New Delhi.

Mander, Harsh, 2003, *Corruption and the Right to Information*, in Rajesh Tandon and Ranjita Mohanty (Eds), *Civil Society and Governance, Issues and Problems*, Sage, New Delhi.

Mathur Kuldeep, 2003, "Good Governance and Pursuit of Transparency in Administration: The Indian Efforts", in Pardeep Sahni, and Uma Medury (Eds), *Governance for Development Issues and Strategies*, Prentice-Hall India, New Delhi .

Rowat, Donald C, 1980, "Laws on Access to Official Documents" in T.N. Chaturvedi, *op.cit.*

Roy, Aruna, Dey Nikhil and Sh.anker Singh, 2001, "Demanding Accountability" *Seminar*, April, New Delhi.

Shankari, Debashish, 2000, *Notes on Freedom of Information Legislation in Different Countries (Mimeographed)* Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative, New Delhi.

21.10 ACTIVITIES

1. Make attempts to enquire about Right to Information legislation in your state and examine its components.
2. Write a report on the implementation of Right to Information legislation in any government agency.