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1. India slips in global RTI ratings. But is the ranking system flawed?

- What facts did the report reveal about India's RTI Act?
- What are the proposed Amendments to RTI Act?
- What challenges do the RTI act faces?
- If used correctly, what could be the significance of RTI act?

GS paper 2 (Important aspects of governance, transparency and accountability, e-governance-applications, models, successes, limitations, and potential; citizens charters, transparency & accountability and institutional and other measures)

In this video, you can find detailed answers for all the above questions.

The above article has been retrieved from:

M Sridhar Acharyulu , Yashovardhan Azad. (2018, November , 14). Terms of disclosure. Indian Express. Retrieved from

<https://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/columns/global-india-rti-ratings-right-to-information-centre-for-law-and-democracy-5443209/>

What is the context about?

- After making its debut at the second rank in 2011 in the global index on Right to Information, the year the global

RTI agency was launched, India has slipped four positions in the last seven years, to settle at the sixth rank, the latest report featuring 123 country showed.

- ❑ Ironically, India ranks lower than smaller nations like Afghanistan — which adopted the RTI later than India — and Serbia, in these ratings, made on the basis of 61 indicators.

What facts did the report reveal about India's RTI Act?

- ❑ According to the report, India performed worst under the section "Sanctions and Protections", scoring just above 60 percent points, whereas it failed to match up to the expectations in five of the sections including scope of the RTI Act, requesting procedures, exceptions and refusals and measures taken to promote the Act, scoring just above 80 percent points.
- ❑ The report reveals that one of the biggest problems facing India's RTI Act is the fact that it offers no protection to officials (from sanctions) who "release information that shows wrongdoing", thus keeping them open to punitive actions for upholding the Act.

What are the proposed Amendments to RTI Act?

The govt has recently proposed some changes in the act which are said to be regressive in nature.

- ❑ The government proposes to do away with the equivalence of the Central Information Commissioners

with the Election Commissioners on the ground that the two have different mandates.

- ❑ The government also proposes to replace the existing fixed five-year tenure of the Information Commissioners with tenure as may be prescribed by it. This would make the tenure largesse to be bestowed by the government.
- ❑ This would be detrimental to the independence and authority of the Information Commissions.

What challenges do the RTI act faces?

The Act faces certain challenges:

- ✓ Huge level of pendency of cases both at national as well as state levels.
- ✓ Non-imposition of penalties – data supplied by 20 commissions shows that penalty was imposed in just 2.4% of the cases disposed of.
- ✓ More than 40 RTI activists had been killed in the process of exposing wrongdoing.
- ✓ Laxity by public authorities in publishing information.
- ✓ The RTI Act, did not give adequate authority to the Information Commissions to enforce their decisions.

If used correctly, what could be the significance of RTI act?

- ❑ The right to information laws, alongside expanding the citizen's rights, should be systematically employed to transform governance.
- ❑ These laws could be a powerful magnet for mobilizing the people and enthusing them to use these laws to enhance and expand their choices for their own betterment.
- ❑ RTI laws directly contribute to improvement in governance by breaking down the barriers between the government and the people by enhancing trust.
- ❑ RTI is the most powerful assault on developing countries endemic corruption.
- ❑ RTI should be an instrument to bring an end to the culture of governmental secrecy and the battle for transparency is to be fought and won in the minds of the civil servants.