

CHALLENGES FACED IN IMPLEMENTING THE RIGHT TO INFORMATION ACT (RTI) OF SRI LANKA AND CREATING AWARENESS OF RIGHTS CULTURE: A COMPARATIVE APPROACH

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The RTI Act is well-regarded, and Sri Lanka is considered to have an excellent right to access information. However, the practical implementation of the Act is currently questionable. Although the Act itself is sound, its implementation is flawed due to various practical challenges. Analysis reveals that one major reason for this is the lack of an awareness in rights culture in Sri Lanka. Implementing RTI faces several challenges, including bureaucratic inertia, insufficient infrastructure, and a general lack of public awareness. This paper examines these issues through a comparative lens, analysing the experiences of various countries in enforcing RTI legislation. Key obstacles identified include the inadequate training and the refusal of public officials, poor record-keeping practices, and resistance to information disclosure due to entrenched power structures. The study also explores effective strategies to address these challenges, such as practical legal reforms, capacity-building programs, and comprehensive public awareness campaigns. Emphasizing the role of civil society and the media, the paper argues for a multi-faceted approach to foster a culture of transparency and accountability. This is a qualitative based approach based on structured interviews and opinions of the public, government officials and journalists interested in RTI Activism. It also uses secondary sources such as reports, journals, reported cases in Right to Information Commission, electronic resources as techniques of data collection. Based on the findings, the researcher concludes that the rights culture in Sri Lanka is underdeveloped due to several factors. Highlighting the significance of fostering a rights culture in Sri Lanka, the researcher emphasizes that it is a necessary mechanism to address the practical problems encountered.

Keywords: RTI Act, Practical Challenges, Awareness, Transparency and Accountability, Rights Culture