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Right to Information Act, 2005: A Comprehensive Framework for Transparency, Accountability and Citizen Empowerment in India

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Abstract: *The Right to Information (RTI) Act, 2005 represents a landmark legislation in India that operationalises the fundamental right to freedom of speech and expression under Article 19(1)(a) of the Constitution. This paper examines the statutory framework of the RTI Act, its institutional mechanisms (Central and State Information Commissions), practical utility across diverse public domains, procedural guidelines for filing applications, exemptions from disclosure, penalty provisions, and the appellate structure. Drawing upon the provisions of the Act and documented citizen experiences, the study demonstrates how RTI functions as an effective instrument for promoting transparency, curbing corruption, and ensuring accountable governance. The paper further provides practical guidance on drafting applications, appeals, and understanding fee structures, thereby serving both academic and practical purposes for researchers, legal practitioners, and ordinary citizens.*

Keywords: Right to Information Act 2005, Transparency, Public Accountability, Central Information Commission, Public Information Officer, Citizen Empowerment, Freedom of Information

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