

INDIAN CASE LAW ON RIGHT TO INFORMATION ACT (2011). By Versha & Jyoti. Allahabad Law agency, Faridabad, Haryana. Pp. xvi+208. Price Rs. 195/-.

THE RIGHT to information is a potent weapon in the hands of citizenry to gain access to public records. It not only provides information but also fosters accountability and transparency and strengthens the democratic polity and rule of law. With these objectives in mind, and prefaced by the immortal lines of Gitanjali by Gurudev Rabindra Nath Tagore *i.e.* “where the mind is without fear and the head is held high ...”, the authors have come out with a commentary on the Right to Information Act. The book under review comprising of more than two hundred pages and divided in six chapter is a scientific and systematic exposition of law and compilation of case law on the Right to information Act.

The first chapter, which introduces the topic provides the constitutional foundation of the right to information as enshrined in article 19(1)(a) of the Constitution of India. Authors have provided a brief history of the evolution of this right starting from *Bennett Coleman* to *PUCL* cases and have discussed the aim, objective and need for its enactment. The second chapter deals with the provisions relating to “information”, “right to information” and “persons entitled to seek information”. The chapter mentions the manner and mode of seeking information from various public authorities as envisaged in the Act. The manner of seeking and giving ‘third party information’ ‘right to appeal’ and cases relating to ‘alternative’ relief have also been discussed in this chapter. The third chapter exclusively deals with the ‘public authorities’, the nature of their duties and obligations and methodology of preserving and giving information to its seekers.

The fourth chapter deals with exemption clause of the Act which provides the grounds for denial to disclose the information. Authors have discussed each and every ground separately and have given some suggestions too. In fact this chapter can be said to be the soul of the book. Chapter five provides commentary on the structure, appointment, powers and functions of central as well as state information commissions. In this chapter the administrative as well as appellate powers of various commissions have been dealt with. The last chapter deals with the overriding effect of the Act, ways and means to make it more effective and the nature and extent of power of the judicial review of orders of different commissions.

The book has very useful appendix in which the authors have attached The Right to Information (Regulation of fee and cost) Rules, The Central Information Commission (Appeal procedure) Rules and rules framed by Arunachal Pradesh, Bihar, Haryana, H.P., Karnataka, M.P., Maharastra, Punjab, Tamilnadu and Odisha states. These are useful because one gets prescribed proforma for filing applications as well as appeals before different forums.



The book has been written in easy English. There is elaborate case law discussion; the case no. and date of its decision also find mention apart from the report in which the same has been published. The book shall be useful not only to lawyers and academicians but also to an ordinary person who wants to know the principle, philosophy and manner of using the Act. The book is moderately priced and is handy ready reckoner of the Right to Information Act.

Recently there have been some welcome developments in the field and authors will be well advised to incorporate them in their next edition.

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