



RIGHT TO INFORMATION AND GOOD GOVERNANCE

PROF. SAIRAM BHAT

Department of Law
National Law School of India University

PRE-REQUISITES : Under Graduation

INTENDED AUDIENCE : Public Information Officers, APIOs, First Appellate Authorities, Lawyers, Academicians, NGOs and Civil Society Organisations, Social Activists, Beneficiaries of Government Services, Legal Advisors, Information Commissioners etc.

INDUSTRIES APPLICABLE TO :

1. All Departments and Ministries of the Government.
2. All Public Sector Undertakings
3. All Public Authorities as defined in the RTI Act
4. All Public Universities and bodies owned and controlled and substantially financed by the Government.
5. All non-governmental organisations substantially financed by the Government.

COURSE OUTLINE :

Transparency in governance and access to information are pivotal to the functioning of a democracy. In the present day and age, when information has been recognised as an essential facet of human life, access to crucial data be it through reports, documents, etc is sine qua non to the fulfilment of the right to a wholesome and dignified life. In this context, this course seeks to provide a comprehensive learning on the Right to Information by delving into varied facets of this right. From mapping the constitutional contours of the right to information to understanding the statutory prescriptions as under the Right to Information Act, 2005 and other allied laws, this course will provide a comprehensive overview of the theme of discussion. To throw light on the jurisprudential and evolutionary aspects of the right to information in the overall scheme of governance, the course will also explicate the executory right through administrative and judicial processes.

ABOUT INSTRUCTOR :

Prof. Dr. Sairam Bhat, Professor of Law at National Law School of India University, Bengaluru, India's pioneer legal institution, with over 20 years of experience in the legal fraternity. His areas of specialization include the Law relating to Public Private Partnerships, Competition Law, Tendering, Contract Management, Environment Protection and the Law on Right to Information

He has served as a Consultant to several Governmental and Non-Governmental Organisations and has conducted several training programmes and workshops for various officers of Government of India, and other State Governments under the aegis of various government bodies including the Administrative Training Institute, Mysore; National Academy of Direct Taxes, Delhi; Vaizag Steel; Central Silk Board; National Productivity Council; GIPARD, Goa and Fiscal Policy Institute, Bengaluru. He did his LL.M, and Ph.D from the Department of Law, University of Mysore and has been awarded the 'Young India Environmental Law Fellowship' and served as Adjunct Faculty at Golden Gate University, California, USA, during the fall, 2003. As a Fulbright-Nehru Fellow, 2010, he was a 'Visiting Researcher' at the Georgetown University, Law Centre Washington DC, during Aug-Dec. 2010. He was also a Linnaeus-Palme Academic Exchange Fellow at the Royal Institute of Technology, Stockholm, Sweden, 2012-13. He has published books titled, Natural Resources Conservation Law [SAGE], Right to Information [Eastern Book House], Contracts, Agreements and Public Policy [NLSIU Book Series -1], Energy Law and Policy in India [NLSIU Book Series-2], Right to Information and Good Governance [NLSIU Books Series-3]. He is also the Chief Editor of the Journal on Environmental Law, Policy and Development and Journal on Law and Public Policy, published by NLSIU.

COURSE PLAN :

Week 1: History and Background to RTI

Week 2: Legislating RTI, Official Secrets Act and RTI, Role of NGOs and activist in RTI, Mis-use of RTI, Important SC and HC judgments in RTI

Week 3: Constitution and RTI

Week 4: Salient Features of RTI-1

Week 5: Salient features of RTI-2

Week 6: Powers and Functions of Information Commission

Week 7: Public Authority

Week 8: Exempted Information

Week 9: RTI & Its interface, Public Records Act, Whistleblower Protection Act, Judiciary and RTI

Week 10: Ecological perspective on RTI, Lessons from RTI: Sakaala: Public Service Guarantee Act

Week 11: RTI: A comparative perspective, Comparative Constitutional and Comparative FOI regime RTI in Srilanka

Week 12: How to Draft RTI Application and Appeals: Do it yourself