

केन्द्रीय सूचना आयोग
Central Information Commission

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अगस्त क्रान्ति भवन / August Kranti Bhavan
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PRESS RELEASE

The Central Information Commission has been organizing the Annual Convention every year since 2006. The essence and justification lies in "Let noble thoughts come to us from all directions". On completion of the first year of implementation of RTI Act, Central Information Commission organised a three-day National Convention at Vigyan Bhawan during 12th-15th October, 2006 the same was attended by nearly 700 delegates representing a cross section of academia, civil society, media, professionals and others. The Second Conference of Central Information Commission with State Chief Information Commissioners and Information Commissioners was more of a professional exercise in house stock taking and exchange of ideas on best practices, challenges, etc. and was organized at India International Centre, New Delhi on 17th October, 2007. The Conference was attended by over 175 delegates from across the country.

The present Annual Convention is the third in the row. The Prime Minister of India has kindly consented to inaugurate the Convention and the Speaker of Lok Sabha has agreed to address the valedictory session. The theme of the present convention is "RTI and its Ramifications for Good Governance". The two day convention will have seven technical sessions covering major aspects of governance. The present convention is being attended by representatives of Civil Society and media both from within the country and from SAARC countries. The two day deliberations are expected to produce documents of contemporary as well as long term relevance to South Asia. Various organizations like CGG, YASAHDA and DOPT have sent

their important publications for display. Technical Sessions are being chaired by Justice Sri JS Verma, Former Chief Justice, Supreme Court, Shri B N Yugandhar, Member Planning Commission, Smt Aruna Roy, Social Activist, Shri Prannoy Roy, CMD, NDTV, Shri Wajahat Habibullah, Chief Information Commissioner, CIC and Shri A N Tiwari, Information Commissioner, CIC.

First Session on “**RTI and Transparent Governance**” is expected to discuss the impact of the RTI Act on various aspects of Governance. The deliberation of the session will make an attempt to analyse the cause and effect relationship of the RTI and the issue of good Governance. The outcome of this Session is also expected to lay down a roadmap for the implementation of the Act in future.

The Second Session on “**RTI - Need for a Different Strategy Specific to Rural Area**” will discuss whether we need to adopt a different strategy for implementing the RTI Act in Rural areas. This Session is expected to bring forth some of the interesting Success Stories of the RTI Act in rural Areas. The Session will also provide a platform to share the attempts made to assess the level of awareness of the RTI Act among the rural folk.

The last Session of the first day aims to discuss “**RTI & Poverty Alleviation**”. The speakers of this session will analyse the Socio-economic nexus of the RTI legislation. The deliberations during this Session will essentially evaluate the potential of an Act in pushing through the implementation of the anti poverty programmes.

The Second day opens with the Session on “**RTI and Protection of Individual Privacy**”. This will be the first attempt since the promulgation of the RTI Act to debate the issue on a forum like this. This Session could deliberate upon and establish the non adversarial aspect of the relationship of the RTI and Individual privacy. One expects a very interesting outcome from this Session including the distance to be covered even in the legislative domain.

The Second Session on the second day is a session which is expected to elucidate the role of media and civil society in the implementation of RTI Act. It will also assess the contributions made thus far by these pivotal stakeholders in the implementation of the RTI Act. The Session is expected to generate an enthusiastic debate.

The Session on “**RTI in South Asia - An Overview**” is the third session of the second day which has three speakers from SAARC Countries. They are expected to take delegates through what may be called a guided tour of the status of freedom of Information Laws in their respective Countries. This Session is expected to generate a freedom of Information map in the South Asian Region.

The last session of the conference is “**Current Assessment of RTI**”. The 3rd Annual Convention will have a distinction of being one of its kind where the assessment of the Act both by the Government and by Civil Society is to be discussed. This Session will throw light on various aspects of such studies and is expected to generate further debate on the methodologies, sample selection and the choice of parameters.

An informed citizenry and transparency in governance are vital to the functioning of a vibrant democracy in which corruption is minimal and the government and its instrumentalities are transparent and accountable to the people. The Right to Information Act, 2005, is one of the most important laws passed since independence. It creates many obligations on the State and the Central Government authorities for its implementation and sound monitoring. This Convention and its outcome have to be seen in this larger perspective.