

COPYRIGHT



ELSEVIER
SSRN

2022 IJIEMR. Personal use of this material is permitted. Permission from IJIEMR must be obtained for all other uses, in any current or future media, including reprinting/republishing this material for advertising or promotional purposes, creating new collective works, for resale or redistribution to servers or lists, or reuse of any copyrighted component of this work in other works. No Reprint should be done to this paper; all copy right is authenticated to Paper Authors

IJIEMR Transactions, online available on 30th Dec 2022. Link

<https://ijiemr.org/downloads.php?vol=Volume-11&issue= Issue12>

DOI:10.48047/IJIEMR/V11/ISSUE12/388

Title: " THE ROLE OF RTI IN ENHANCING TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY IN RETAIL MANAGEMENT"

Volume 11, ISSUE 12, Pages: 3133- 3140

Paper Authors

DR. RACHNA CHOUHAN



USE THIS BARCODE TO ACCESS YOUR ONLINE PAPER

To Secure Your Paper as Per **UGC Guidelines** We Are Providing A Electronic Bar code

THE ROLE OF RTI IN ENHANCING TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY IN RETAIL MANAGEMENT

DR. RACHNA CHOUHAN

Guest Faculty L N M I Patna (Bihar)

ABSTRACT

An essential instrument for increasing openness and responsibility in retail administration is the Right to Information (RTI) Act. Providing people with access to vital information regarding retail operations, RTI enhances customer trust and operational efficiency, which is examined in this study. Using a combination of survey data and in-depth case studies, this study shows that RTI is becoming more well-known among consumers and that it has a beneficial effect on retail operations, which in turn improves customer service and compliance. Both customers and retailers stand to gain from RTI's efforts to promote ethical behaviors in the retail industry, which are crucial in today's cutthroat market.

KEYWORDS: Transparency, Accountability, Retail Management, Consumer Trust, Operational Efficiency.

I. INTRODUCTION

Technological developments, shifting customer tastes, and fiercer competition have all contributed to the retail sector's meteoric rise and fall over the years. Management in retail, one of the world's biggest employment industries, has its fair share of problems, especially when it comes to issues of openness and responsibility. Misleading advertising, poor quality control, and other forms of fraud have chipped away at consumers' faith in businesses. As a result of this loss of trust, there is a rising need for more openness and responsibility in the industry, which has sparked research on potential regulatory frameworks to improve business operations. In 2005, India passed the Right to Information (RTI) statute, which gives individuals the legal right to request and receive information from government agencies. This statute is one example of a framework that tries to empower citizens. The purpose of this law is to make sure that stores are honest and responsible, which has far-reaching effects on retail management.

Even while RTI is primarily aimed for fighting corruption and increasing public accountability, it has had an impact on private sector practices, especially in retail management, and goes beyond the realm of conventional public sector governance. The legislation encourages more scrutiny from stakeholders and consumers by requiring public entities to provide information about their operations. More and more, shoppers are using RTI to learn more about stores' rules, procedures, and offerings as they become more knowledgeable and vocal about their rights. Customers are better able to make educated purchases, and businesses are compelled to uphold ethical standards and enhance their operations as a result of this empowerment. The mutually beneficial connection between RTI and retail management highlights the importance of

openness in creating a competitive retail setting where customers have faith in companies to provide high-quality goods and services.

With customer confidence being of the utmost importance in retail management, RTI plays a pivotal role in increasing openness and responsibility. Intense competition and quick changes in consumer behavior make it imperative for retailers to take proactive measures to retain client loyalty. Retailers may show they are committed to ethics and openness by incorporating RTI into their systems. For example, customers feel more connected to brands when stores are transparent about their pricing tactics, customer service rules, and sourcing practices. Because people are more inclined to do business with companies that value honesty and ethics, this boosts customer happiness and loyalty to the brand.

In addition, RTI is crucial in the retail industry for resolving complaints and encouraging responsibility. It might be difficult for consumers to get their money back when they buy things that don't meet their expectations. Customers have the authority to ask specific questions about retail practices, such as price differences or deceptive advertising, via the right to submit RTI requests. By making stores answer these questions, RTI promotes a culture of responsibility in which companies are held to account for properly and quickly resolving customer complaints. Both customers and stores stand to gain from more proactive interaction, which has the potential to enhance service delivery and operational processes.

Using RTI in retail management isn't a picnic, despite all the benefits it may provide. Many people still don't know what the RTI Act is and how to use it to get the information they need. Because of this ignorance, RTI may not be able to achieve its goal of increasing retail sector accountability and openness. Plus, some stores could be reluctant to be transparent because they are afraid it would reveal their operational shortcomings or put them under too much public scrutiny. The promotion of consumer education on RTI and its relation to retail management is vital in addressing these difficulties. Furthermore, stores should see openness not as a risk but as an opportunity, as building confidence with customers is an investment in the future.

Retail management that incorporates RTI is in line with the changing expectations of consumers, who are increasingly looking for businesses to operate in an ethical and sustainable manner. Being open and honest about their operations can help businesses thrive in this new paradigm, where sustainability and ethical sourcing are becoming more important to customers. Retailers may showcase their dedication to social responsibility and environmental sustainability by making information about their sourcing, manufacturing methods, and labor practices easily accessible. This boosts their reputation as a brand and draws in an increasing number of customers who value ethics while making purchases.

Also, retail management may foster innovation and continual improvement by using RTI. By responding to customer queries and comments made possible by RTI requests, stores may find ways to improve their operations and find new ways to attract customers. A culture of responsibility is developed via this iterative process of development, which drives organizations to consistently meet and beyond customer expectations. By taking the lead in

being transparent and ethical, retailers that adopt this approach may stand out in a crowded marketplace.

The Right to Information Act is a strong impetus for making retail management more open and accountable. Retailers Trust Initiative (RTI) promotes honesty and transparency in the retail industry by giving customers the authority to access information. Although there are still obstacles to overcome, such as retailers' reluctance and consumers' lack of knowledge, RTI has enormous potential advantages. Businesses that value openness and responsibility from their employees not only win the confidence of their customers, but also boost productivity and credibility in the market. Keeping up with the needs of shoppers who are more knowledgeable and picky will require retailers to include RTI into their management procedures as the retail industry undergoes continuous change. This article delves into the consequences of RTI for customer trust, operational methods, and the broader retail environment, as it investigates the varied function of RTI in retail management. This study seeks to show, by an examination of case studies and actual data, that RTI is useful for making the retail industry more accountable and ethical, which in turn helps to make the marketplace more trustworthy and open.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Mabillard, Vincent & Zumofen, Raphael. (2020) in both theory and practice today, accountability and transparency are typically thought of as cornerstones of effective government. Numerous non-governmental organizations and international institutions have nothing but admiration for them. Both notions have high inherent worth, which is the basic basis for this normative approach. Their practical usefulness is also often praised. Accountability, in contrast to transparency, may expose wrongdoing and bring those responsible to light via a public ritual of giving accounts. Thus, the two concepts have been employed interchangeably, often, and as co-determinants of improved governance.

Nigam, Shalu. (2015) Promising openness and responsibility in government, the Right to Information Act, which was approved in 2005, gave the ordinary people reason to be hopeful. As an additional tool in the fight against corruption, the law may play a pivotal role in shifting the balance of power away from the elite and toward the people. The overarching goal of enacting this law was to provide the groundwork for a genuine participatory democracy and to challenge the long-established hierarchical conventional form of government. Nevertheless, after 10 years of its execution, many of its promises still haven't been delivered. Because of current bureaucratic machinery efforts to obstruct the legislation's seamless implementation, the law has not been beneficial to people. The legislation has been used in a way that has excluded most of the population, rather than empowered them. Democracy is struggling to operate properly due to the growing divide between information providers and recipients. Instead of voluntarily disclosing the necessary information, the information provider is actively working to hinder its disclosure, turning the Right to Information (RTI) into an Obstruction to Information (OTI).

Sharma, Prashant. (2012) Produced, consumed, and celebrated as a watershed moment in India's democratic evolution, the 2005 national Right to Information (RTI) Act changed the

dynamic between citizens and the government in profound ways. The act's passage was the product of a grassroots movement. This thesis raises doubts about this story and suggests that there could be more nuanced explanations for this occurrence than previously thought. To start, the grassroots movement's top brass had deep ties to the ruling class, so they had unrivaled access to influential circles and all the resources the movement needed. Second, the urban, educated, high-caste, upper-middle-class elite who had previously supported the demand for an RTI Act had left the state and joined the private sector after the economic liberalization project and the democratization of the higher bureaucracy. In the 1990s, there was a movement to privatize public goods and services, and the RTI Act was reframed to limit its scope to the government, reflecting this change.

Agrawal, Chetan. (2012) a paradigm shift from a state-centric to a citizen-centric model of development was intensified in the 1990s by the Right to Information movement. To fight the pervasive corruption in India's public sector, a grassroots movement started by demanding freedom of information emerged. In response to mounting pressure, the state approved the Right to Information Act (henceforth RTI) in October 2005 with the goal of fostering good governance. The goal of this research is to determine whether and to what extent the Right to Information Act (RTI) is improving administrative transparency in India. According to my findings from interviews, secondary data analysis, and content analysis, the RTI Act is making the Indian administrative system more open and transparent. Public authorities are now more responsive and accountable to service consumers as a result of the RTI Act's efforts to reduce possible information asymmetries, which is revealing corruption. The participation of civil society groups and media in the Act's passage, review, and implementation has been critical.

Tabassum, Shahla & Sadashivam, T. (2012) if the nation is serious about achieving its good governance objectives, its governing system must be open and accountable to the people. Within this framework, the Indian government has granted several rights to its citizens over the past decade, including the right to work through the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), the right to an education, and many more. However, the most important of these rights is the right to information (RTI), which holds the government accountable to its people. The purpose of this essay is to examine the Right to Information Act (RTI) and its execution in India, with the hope of offering some suggestions on how to improve its efficacy. So is the appropriate moment to do so now that the RTI Act has been in operation for six years.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In order to determine how the Right to Information (RTI) Act has helped make retail management more open and accountable, this study used a mixed-approaches strategy, combining qualitative and quantitative research methods. Consumers and store managers were surveyed to gauge their knowledge and thoughts on RTI's efficacy, which was the main source of data collection. To further understand how RTI has affected retail operations, we interviewed a small group of retail experts. To fully grasp RTI's impact on the retail industry, secondary data like as case studies and scholarly literature were also examined.

IV. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 consumers regarding their awareness of RTI and its relevance to retail management

Awareness of RTI	Percentage (%)
Aware	65
Not Aware	35

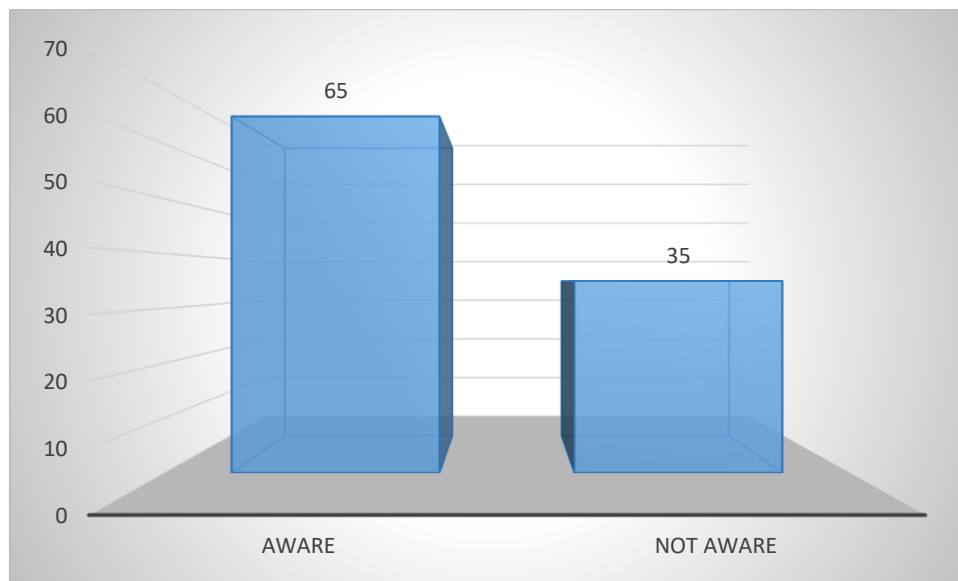


Figure 1 consumers regarding their awareness of RTI and its relevance to retail management

According to the table, 65% of respondents said they were acquainted with the Right to Information (RTI) Act, indicating that consumers are well knowledgeable about it. This shows that most people are becoming more aware of their rights to access government records, which may give them more agency when dealing with businesses. The Act's potential to promote openness and responsibility in the retail sector may be hampered, on the other hand, by the fact that 35% of respondents do not know what RTI is. This discrepancy highlights the need of better educating consumers about RTI so they may get its full advantages.

Table 2 Retail managers reported that RTI requests often led to improvements in operational practices, as outlined

Operational Improvement	Percentage of Respondents (%)
Enhanced Customer Service	70

Increased Compliance	60
Improved Inventory Management	55
Better Staff Training	50



Figure 2 Retail managers reported that RTI requests often led to improvements in operational practices

Based on their experiences, retail managers may attest that Right to Information (RTI) requests have improved a number of internal processes. In particular, seventy percent of managers said that RTI has greatly improved customer service, suggesting that open communication between stores and their customers leads to happier shoppers. Also, 60% of respondents said they were more compliant with regulations after using RTI, which might mean that the tool promotes accountability and best practices. The fact that 55% of those who took the survey saw an improvement in inventory management shows how openness may make things run more smoothly. Finally, half of the managers who took the survey said that RTI helped improve staff training, which shows that it is helping to create a more informed workforce that can better respond to customer questions.

V. CONCLUSION

When it comes to retail management, the Right to Information (RTI) Act is vital for increasing openness and responsibility. Most customers are aware of RTI, according to this study's results, which gives them the authority to demand improved practices from stores. Improved customer service, more compliance, and more effective staff training were just a few of the operational benefits that shop managers noted as a direct outcome of RTI inquiries. Retailers and customers

alike must take advantage of RTI's rising profile in order to create a more open and accountable retail landscape that is good for business.

REFERENCES

1. Tabassum, Shahla & Sadashivam, T. (2012). Right to Information Act in India: an Overview. *Journal of the Knowledge Economy*. 6. 10.1007/s13132-012-0112-9.
2. Mabillard, Vincent & Zumofen, Raphael. (2020). the transparency--accountability relationship depends on the context and the issues at stake. *Public Money & Management*. 40. 89-90. 10.1080/09540962.2019.1665365.
3. Agrawal, Chetan. (2012). Right to Information in India: Tool for bringing transparency in the Indian Administrative System.
4. Sharma, Prashant. (2012). the right to information act in India: the turbid world of transparency reforms.
5. Nigam, Shalu. (2015). the Right to Information Act: Ten Years of Transparency or a Decade of Ambiguity. *SSRN Electronic Journal*. 10.2139/ssrn.2653596.
6. Ghosh, Sujay. (2018). Accountability, Democratization and the Right to Information in India. *Asian Studies Review*. 42. 626-647. 10.1080/10357823.2018.1516734.
7. Mann, Jeet. (2024). *International Journal of Transparency and Accountability in Governance* vol X 2024.
8. Billah, Motasim & Uddin, Muhammad. (2019). Uses of Right to Information (RTI) Act by Journalists in Promoting Accountability and Transparency in Public Services and NGOs. XIII. 7-19.
9. Young, Kim & Yin, Mew. (2020). Role of E-Government and Open Data to Enhance Transparency Practices. *Journal of Enterprise Business Management*. 47-54. 10.46532/jebm.20200902.
10. Mabillard, Vincent & Zumofen, Raphael. (2015). the uncertain relationship between transparency and accountability revisited through four Swiss cases.
11. Mandowara, Khushi & Thomas, Vineeth. (2023). Proactive transparency in governance: A comparative study of digitalisation of the Right to Information Act in central and state governments in India. *Asian Journal of Comparative Politics*. 8. 594-607. 10.1177/20578911231157437.
12. Dodd, Maya. (2014). the Indian State and Accountability since the Right to Information (RTI).

13. Verma, Neeta & Misra, Durga & Shreyaskar, Pankaj & Kannan, M. (2009). enabling citizens to leverage the provisions of the RTI act of India: an ICT driven case study. 341-346. 10.1145/1693042.1693113.
14. Svärd, Proscovia. (2017). Accountability, transparency, and the role of information management. 10.1016/B978-0-08-100874-4.00007-7.
15. Saxena, Prabodh. (2009). Public authority and the RTI. Economic and Political Weekly. 44. 13-16. 10.2307/40279148.