

Everyone should know the right to information

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Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman awakened the Bangali nation through a long movement and struggle and initiated the mantra of independence step by step. Under his strong leadership, independent and sovereign Bangladesh emerged in 1971. In independent Bangladesh, he wrote the constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh in 1972. The people are recognized as possessors of all power. Article 39 of the Constitution includes the right to freedom of thought, conscience and speech as well as the right to information as one of the basic human rights of the citizen. This is how he reflected the decision of the United Nations i.e. the World Assembly for the first time.

Based on the power of the constitution, the draft law on right to information was prepared with the joint efforts of human rights activists, media personalities, academicians, civil society, non-governmental organizations. Ordinance passed in 2008. On the eve of the national elections in 2008, only the Awami League among the then major parties pledged to ensure free flow of information in its election manifesto. On March 29, 2009, the first session of the National Parliament passed the Right to Information Act, gazetted it and established the commission. From that, the legal recognition of the establishment of their right to information for the empowerment of the people in Bangladesh. Note that the Right to Information Act was enacted and implemented in India in 2005. Bangladesh Right to Information Act 2009 is a modern, unique and progressive law. In this law, the people exercise power over the authorities; Demands accounts of the authority's work, services and budget; In other laws the authority exercises power over the people.

Our Right to Information Act is undoubtedly universal and inclusive. Access to public information is a stepping stone to the fulfillment of all other fundamental human rights. But among our large population the backward, disadvantaged, crippled, disabled, sick, widows, elderly, abject poverty, floating, vulnerable children and women, minorities, illiterate, are ignorant of fundamental rights, taken for granted. Moreover, the lack of information signature is clearly present at different levels of society starting from the grassroots. On this occasion, many authorities also show deliberate reluctance and reluctance to provide and disclose information instead of showing the required level of sensitivity towards these communities. But the core of the constitution is that the people are the source of all the powers of the republic and the duty of every person engaged in the work of the republic is to try to serve the people. For these reasons, many intellectuals consider our law to be modern and progressive.

The general idea is that the owner of the information is the state or the government or the authority in the language of the law. It is the authority's own business, as much as the public will know, as much as the authority will kindly inform. Again, many people think that these are matters of the developed world or the West. On the other hand, many of those who will give information or who have public information have not changed the culture or mentality or attitude of keeping information secret even in an era, they are stuck in the fence of secrecy. In Bangladesh, the Right to Information Act 2009 has given mandatory and legal recognition to the right of all citizens to seek, obtain, and benefit from all necessary information. By creating free flow of information and ensuring people's right to information, the way is paved for their empowerment. By increasing the transparency and accountability of authorities, reducing corruption and establishing good governance, the path to democracy has been paved.

India's Right to Information Act is one of the most developed, modern and progressive laws in the world. It is considered a model for the Asian continent and a benchmark in law reviews of other countries in the region. In the background of such strong legislation was the grassroots social movement in various states of India for right to information. Moreover, among the Asian countries, India has the largest number of civil society organizations directly responsible for information rights activists. In the background of law making in Bangladesh, the role of non-governmental organizations was very important. However, considerable positive steps have been taken in the implementation of the law established in public interest. The achievement is no less. There are more than 42,000 responsible officers of various public and private authorities across the country. All these offices have alternative responsible officers and appeal officers.

The first official record-keeping was initiated in the Senate of the observatory of Rome in order to ensure the accuracy of administrative work and to provide accurate information to the people. It was the institutional phase of right to information. The history of deprivation of information is as old as the history of deprivation of rights of the common people. At the stage of the development of civilization, the class division in the society has been done by the powerful people who have blinded the common people. Safeguards their wealth, wealth and power. Again, the issue of people's right to know has been taken into consideration since the stage of development of civilization, so the relationship between the right to information and the development of democracy is very close.

It is said that Finland is the cradle of information rights movement. But Finland was under Sweden at that time. In 1766, Sweden's Press Freedom Act was passed. Through this law, Swedish people are guaranteed access to documents created or received in public institutions. Government, Parliament, Church, Local Government Acts, Legislatures are all under its purview. Governments are forced to provide free and fast information. This is the first law in the world to ensure access to information of citizens. The role of the French Revolution in establishing the right to information was significant. Through the French Revolution in 1789, France was the first to recognize the right to information as a human right of every citizen. The people of France have the right to demand from a public official an account of his administration. However, the Right to Information Act was enacted in France in 1978. Access to information and the right to information was being established throughout Europe and America when the Indian subcontinent became a British colony. In 1757, when freedom was fading in the wilderness of Palashi, the people were sitting at home clapping their hands and chanting, "The battle is between kings and kings, see who loses and who wins". Far from freedom of information, the region was drowning in the brutality of subjugation. Moreover, in British India, due to the promulgation of the 'Official Secrets Act' in 1923, the culture of information secrecy matured. It did not improve much even during the Pakistan era. Meanwhile, the United Nations was established in the middle of the 20th century. The General Assembly of the United Nations recognized the right to information as a fundamental right through a resolution on December 14, 1946. Later, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was issued by the United Nations on December 10, 1948. Article 19 of the Declaration expressly enshrines freedom of information as a universal human right. This is one of the events in the history of establishment of right to information. Thereafter, the right to information was further consolidated by incorporating the United Nations' International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights adopted on 16 December 1966. Apart from this, the right to information is recognized in various international documents including the 'Commonwealth Principles of Freedom of Information', the European Union Human Rights Convention. Since then, freedom of information or right to information laws have been enacted in various countries, the number of which is 129 so far.

One of the goals of the current generation is to create a corruption-free society for future generations by ensuring transparency and accountability by providing information to the public.

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