

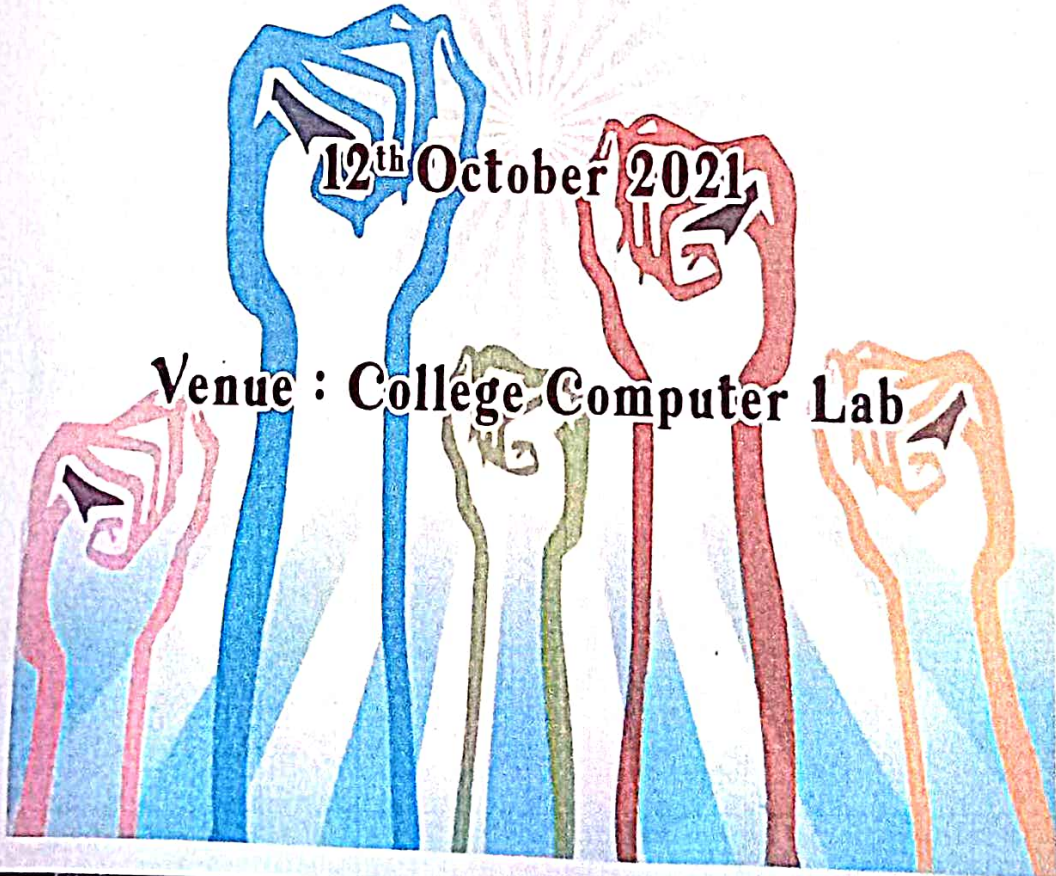
# Departmental Seminar on Right To Information

**Conducted by Dept. of Political Science**

**Kiang Nangbah Govt. College Jowai,**

**12<sup>th</sup> October 2021**

**Venue : College Computer Lab**



**KIANG NANGBAH GOVERNMENT COLLEGE  
JOWAI-793150, MEGHALAYA**

**DEPARTMENTAL SEMINAR  
ON  
THE IMPORTANCE OF RIGHT TO INFORMATION  
ACT (RTI)**

**DATE: 12<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER, 2021**

**ORGANISED BY**

**DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE  
KIANG NANGBAH GOVERNMENT COLLEGE,  
JOWAI- 793150, MEGHALAYA**



**Theme: "The Importance of Right to Information Act (RTI)"**

**12<sup>th</sup> October, 2021**

**Organisation: Department of Political Science, Kiang Nangbah Government College, Jowai**

**Objectives of the Seminar**

The objectives of the seminar are to acquaint students with the Right to Information Act (RTI) as well as highlight the important issues pertaining to this field.

**Sub-Themes**

(Papers in the following sub-themes were invited)

- Origin of RTI
- RTI and Protection of Whistle-Blowers
- RTI and Political Parties
- Procedure for obtaining Information
- Success Stories of RTI

**Expected Accomplishment**

- New Insights into the RTI Act
- Promotion of greater participation in public affairs

**Organising Committee of the Seminar**

**Convener**

L. Kharpuria, Assoc. Professor, Dept of Political Science

**Members of Organising Committee**

Shri. S. Laloo, Assoc. Professor, Dept of Political Science

Smt. R. Challam, Asst. Professor, Dept of Political Science

Smt. D. Lamare, Asst. Professor, Dept of Political Science

Smt. I. Rymbui, Asst. Professor, Dept of Political Science

Smt. S. Suja, Asst. Professor, Dept of Political Science



## SESSION -I

**Day- time: Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> October, 2021 12h30 to 13h30**

At the outset, the convener of the seminar, Smt. L. Kharpuria welcomes everyone to the Seminar. The convener also introduced the theme of the Seminar "The Importance of the Right to Information Act" and opened it with a quote "Know where to find the information, how to use it, that's the secret of success" taken from Albert Einstein. The Convener stressed on knowing more about the theme because Right to Information influence the way we think, as well as enable us to get justified decision. It was also stated that the programme will benefit the participants to a great extent. Thereafter, the programme for the seminar was read out by the Convener.

### **No. 1: Welcome Speech by Shri. S. Laloo (HOD)**

The Head of the Department Shri S. Laloo greets all the participants and welcomed them to the Department Seminar. He also explained to the audience that on account of Covid 19 pandemic, it was difficult to meet the students as expected. However, despite the challenges, he was happy to see students taking part in the seminar and express hope that the seminar will benefit everyone for their future studies. A special welcome was addressed to Shri. C. War, Lecturer, Department of Political Science from Morning Session.

### **No. 2: Enlightenment on the theme by Smt. I. Rymbui, Asst. Professor, Dept of Political Science.**

Smt. I. Rymbui, enlightened the participants on the theme with its origin from the Fundamental Right to Freedom of Speech and Expression and its implementation in the Indian Constitution which came into force in the year 2012. Emphasis was also laid on transparency in public administration. The participants were also informed that by the RTI Act, citizens can exercise this right more in connection with the functioning of the state as it implies participation of people in governance and administration which is very important in checking on corruption.

### No. 3: Paper presentation by Students

Resource Persons	Chairperson
1) Shri. S. Laloo (HOD) Assoc. Professor, Dept of Political Science.	Smt. I. Rymbui, Asst. Professor, Dept of Political Science.
2) Smt. R. Challam, Asst. Professor, Dept of Political Science.	

Sl. No	Title of Paper	Presenter
1.	Origin of the Right to Information	Ibadashisha Dkhar
2.	Procedure for obtaining information	Kampher Syih
3.	RTI and Protection of Whistle-Blowers	Wima Surong

#### - Key Points as presented by Ibadashisha Dkhar

##### Sub-Theme: Origin of the Right to Information

The history of the Right to Information dates back to the 17<sup>th</sup> century in Europe when John Milton led a movement for democracy, human rights and press freedom. In India, the preamble of the Constitution and Article 19 (1)A emphasized freedom of speech and expression because government functions must be transparent, accountable and responsible in a civil society. The Right to Information is an intrinsic part of the Fundamental Right to free speech and expression.

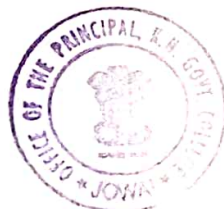
Attention was also drawn to the struggle by Anna Hazare in his fight against corruption. This led to multiple enactments of the Act by various State governments and finally by the Government of India under the UPA regime on October 12<sup>th</sup>, 2005 after series of campaigns, agitations and deliberations.

#### - Key Points as presented by Kampher Syih

##### Sub-Theme: Procedure for Obtaining Information

Procedure to be followed for obtaining information under RTI such as by writing an Application for obtaining information in form, 'A' to the State Public Information Officer, depositing and quantum of fee, procedures in deciding the appeal, mode of serving notice and repeal and saving of the Act were discussed at length.

It was also mentioned that the Right to Information Act is a tool that checks corruption, and holds the various bodies, agencies and departments of the government accountable to the public.



- **Key Points as presented by Wima Surong**

**Sub-Theme: RTI and Protection of Whistle-Blowers**

The presenter explain to the participants the meaning of Whistleblowing where it was stated that it was an action aimed at drawing the attention of stakeholders to instances of unethical practices in an organization. In addition, it was stated that a whistle-blower is a person who could be an employee of a company, or a government agency disclosing information to the public or some higher authority about any wrongdoing which could be in the form of fraud and corruption and how in India there is a law entitled Whistle-Blowers Protection, Act, 2014 to protect the whistle blowers. In addition, the genesis of the Act and the highlights of the Act were also mentioned.

**10 MINUTES SHORT TEA BREAK**

**SESSION -2**

**Day- time: Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> October, 2021 13h45 to 15h00**

**No. 4: Paper presentation by Teachers**

Sl. No	Title of Paper	Presenter
1.	Success stories of the Right to Information Act	Smt. D. Lamare, Asst. Professor, Dept of Political Science
2.	Right to Information Act and Political parties.	Shri. C. War, Lecturer, Dept of Political Science

- **Key Points as presented by D. Lamare**

RTI is a citizen-centric act enacted in 2005 by the UPA Government under the leadership of Dr Manmohan Singh but came into force in 2012. The presenter stressed the significance of commemorating this day as the Foundation day of RTI as it empowers the common man to get information regarding how the government function. RTI also acts as a kind of a grievance redressal mechanism.

**Success stories of the Right to Information Act**

1. Rajasthan Himmatsar villagers use RTI to end woes with regards to Public Distribution System where the dealer black marketed the goods. As a result of the RTI, the dealer lost the dealership and was made to pay the villagers over Rs 4 lakh.

2. **Adarsh Society Scam:** A six-storey building meant for the widows of Kargil war heroes.



ground into a 11 storey high rise building called Adarsh housing society. Located at the posh Mumbai Colaba residential area, it became the abode of politicians, bureaucrats and top military officers. The nexus was exposed by RTI activists. The exposure revealed that the project of land devt. not belong to the state government, but to the Ministry of Defence and culminated in the resignation of Asha Chavan the then Chief Minister of Maharashtra.

3. 2G Scam: The 2G scam which took place in the UPA regime revolved around the government auctioning the 2G spectrum. Top ministers had allegedly included an undercharge bribe to mobile phone companies while allocating the frequencies, in exchange for a bribe. This reportedly cost the exchequer a whopping Rs 1.38 lakh crore. This phase of power was exposed by an RTI filed by SuShant Chandu Agrawal.

4. Commonwealth Game Scam: An RTI filed by an NGO revealed that the Delhi government had diverted Rs 744 crore from funds earmarked for the welfare of the Dalit community to the commonwealth games.

In conclusion, it was stated that if the RTI is used and implemented prudently, it has the potential to unleash good governance system, more responsive to community needs as this is the basic premise of democracy.

#### Key Points as presented by C. War

##### Sub Theme: Right to Information Act and Political parties.

Questions were raised as to whether political parties come within the purview of RTI? The sub-theme was debated in detail by the presenter. It was mentioned in the introduction that the inclusion of Political parties under the Right to Information Act has been a long-standing issue that has not been resolved till now. Political parties have opposed this move on the ground that they do not fall within the ambit of public authority. Further, major national parties including the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), the Indian National Congress (INC) and the Communist Party have expressed their displeasure towards the RTI on grounds of internal affairs of parties.

On the other hand, many civil societies and activists have been demanding that there should be complete transparency and accountability in the activities of political parties since they fall within public authority. It was also pointed out that political parties act as a link between the citizens and the government. Therefore, they may also be considered as public authorities. In this regard, the Central Information Commission dated June 3, 2011 has given a final order that six national parties namely, INC, BJP, BSP, CPI (M), CPI, NCP to be public authority under section 2 (b) of the RTI Act, however, none of the parties comply with the order. It was

also pointed out by the presenter that due to the Right to Information (Amendment) Bill in August, 2013 and since all political parties have a website and all information related to the parties are displayed on their websites, consequently, political parties remain outside the purview of the law. In conclusion, it was emphasized by the presenter that for a vibrant and transparent democracy, even political parties should be transparent in their activities and also urging the audience and the participants to organize social movements to demand for transparency and accountability from political parties.

#### **No. 5: Interaction Round**

It was overwhelming to observe that during the interaction round, several questions were raised by the participants. It may also be mentioned that all the paper presenters had done a commendable job of replying to all queries raised by the participants. During the interaction round, more clarity was provided to the different sub-themes that were discussed.

The Chairperson, Smt. I. Rymbai urge the students to come forward in the future for paper presentations. Emphasis was laid on assignments and that assignments written by students should also be presented in the same manner so as to prepare students for further studies and inter-college seminars.

The seminar has helped in understanding the Right to Information and its application in public life. It is to be concluded that the seminar was enlightening and insightful with the hope that it will benefit the students' community in their studies.

#### **No. 6: Declaration of results**

The result of the paper presentation for the students was announced by the Convener and the Head of Department, Shri. S. Laloo, Associate Professor was invited to hand over the First prize to Wima Surong who presented a paper on RTI and Protection of Whistle Blowers. Smt. R. Challam, Asst. Professor, Dept of Political Science was invited to hand over the Second prize to Kampher Syih and the Third prize was handed over by Shri. C. War, Lecturer, Dept of Political Science to Ibadashisha Dkhar.

The Convener also joined hands with all the teachers in congratulating the students who presented the papers.





No. 7: Vote of thanks

The session concluded with a vote of thanks from Shri. S. Laloo, Head, Department of Political Science to the following:

- 1) Principal, Kiang Nangbah Government College who has granted permission to organise the Seminar and to utilize the Computer Lab
- 2) V<sup>th</sup> Semester Students (Political Science Honours) for sparing their time.
- 3) All the teachers from Political Science Department for their hard work for the successful conduct of the seminar. Special thanks go to C. War, Lecturer, Dept. of Political Science from the Morning Section for his valuable contribution.

HOD *S. Laloo*  
18/10/2021

Pol. Sc

Report prepared by

*S. Suja*

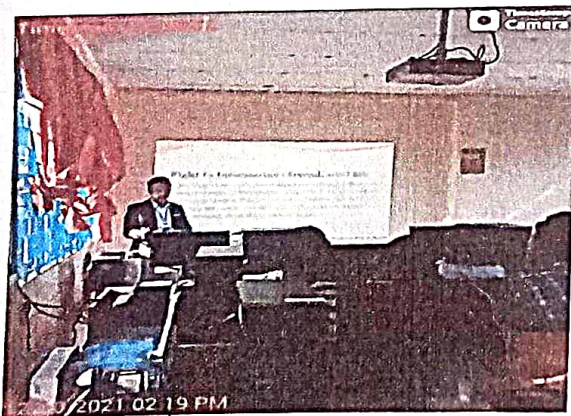
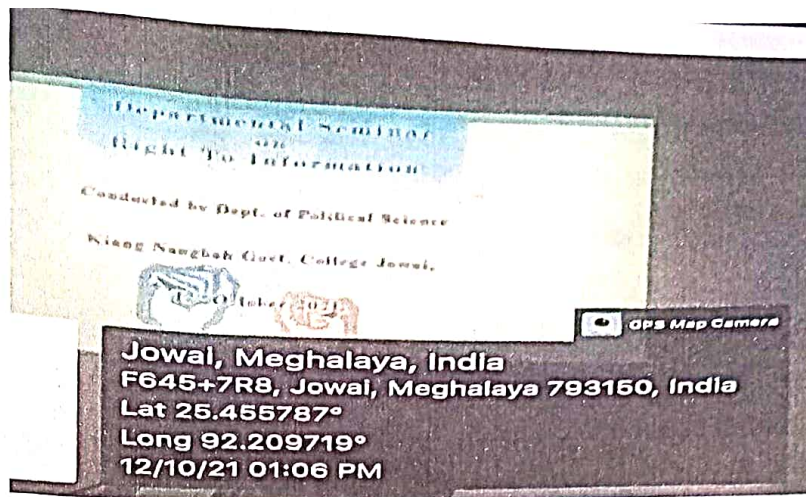
Smt. Sngewkmen Suja

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