

BACKGROUND

The evolution of Freedom of Information has been traced to 7th Century China.

In 1707 AD, in Sweden a statute was adopted compelling the publishers of all printed literature to lodge legal deposit copies of everything they produced with government approved libraries.

Finnish clergyman Anders Chydenius is regarded as the true father of Freedom of Information and was mainly responsible for the Swedish Right-of-Access to Public Records Act of 1766, specifically aimed to create an open society in which even documents such as letters from foreign Heads of State to the Swedish Prime Minister were, and still are, open to public scrutiny.

Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sangathan (MKSS) of Rajasthan in 1987 found that the famine relief funds were not benefiting the poor. It then demanded the information recorded in the official files regarding the expenditure.

Consumer Education and Research Council (CERS) proposed a draft RTI law in 1993.

In 1996 Press Council of India headed by Justice P. B. Sawant presented a draft model law, which became the basis for draft of Freedom of Information Bill 1997.

Emergence of new democracies in the last decade strengthened the RTI movement.

H. D. Shourie committee drafted law in 1997 but it was not introduced in the Parliament. The same was reworked and introduced as Freedom of Information Bill in 2000.

50 countries have enacted RTI and 30 more are in the process of enacting it.

RTI Act, 2005 is thus a logical culmination of a worldwide movement.