

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF LAW MANAGEMENT & HUMANITIES

[ISSN 2581-5369]

Volume 9 | Issue 2

2026

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The Digital Mandate: Leveraging E-Governance to Strengthen RTI Implementation and Administrative Transparency

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ABSTRACT

The Right to Information Act, 2005 was enacted to ensure transparency and accountability within India's administrative framework. Still, the enforcement of this legislative framework has often been constrained by Institutional inertia, Procedural inefficiencies and limited accessibility to information. In recent years, the expansion of e-governance initiatives presents a significant opportunity to realign the functioning of the Right to Information regime. This paper examines the role of Digital Governance in strengthening the implementation of the Right to Information framework and enhancing Administrative Transparency.

The research is structured around a legal policy evaluation framework that evaluates the impact of digital platforms, online RTI interfaces, electronic record management systems and responsiveness of public authorities. It critically analysis how technology driven processes facilitate timely disclosure, reduce discretionary control and promote transparency in compliance with statutory obligations. The Paper also identifies significant challenges that continue to undermine digital transparency, including disparities in digital access, technological capacity constraints, privacy and data protection concerns and resistance withing bureaucratic structures.

The Study further accesses the adequacy of existing legal and policy frameworks in enabling the effective integration of e-governance tools with transparency obligations under the Right to Information Act. It argues that while digital governance is not a substitute for an institutional accountability, its strategic and legally informed application can substantially reinforce the democratic intent of the Right to Information framework and reinforce transparency norms and participatory governance, The Paper concluded by advancing policy oriented recommendations aimed at strengthening the Nexus between e-governance

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initiatives and transparency obligations, thereby strengthening citizen participation and administrative accountability in the digital governance landscape.

Keywords: *E-Governance Systems, Digital Transparency, E-Governance Systems, Public Sector Governance, Administrative Accountability*

I. INTRODUCTION

Transparency and Accountability are recognised as core principles of democratic governance and form an integral part of India's Constitutional framework. In the Indian Constitutional Framework, the Supreme Court has recognised the Right to Information as implicit in the Freedom of Speech and expression under Article 19(1)(a) of the Indian Constitution.³ Therefore, access to information is a prerequisite for informed citizenship and responsible governance. The Judicial understanding is culminated in the enactment of the Right to Information Act, 2005⁴ which sought to ensure transparency by imposing statutory obligations on public authorities to disclose information and by establishing mechanisms for accountability within public authorities.

Notwithstanding its progressive design, the implementation of the RTI Act has encountered significant operational limitations. Administrative delays, fragmented record-keeping practices, discretionary control over information, and institutional resistance have constrained the effectiveness of the RTI framework.⁵ The mere existence of a statutory right has proved insufficient to secure timely and meaningful access to information within traditional administrative structures, as transparency cannot be sustained through legislative mandate alone without supportive systems capable of efficient and consistent information management. The formal availability of a legal right has often failed to translate into meaningful access to information, particular for marginalised sections of society. These shortcomings are particularly evident within manual and fragmented administrative processes that limit both accessibility and oversight.

The growing reliance on e-governance in India reflects a significant shift in the Institutional setting within which the Right to Information regime operates. The adoption of digital tools such as online RTI Filing systems, electronic record maintenance, and technology based disclosure mechanisms has begun to transform the manner in which public authorities generate,

³ Constitution of India, art 19(1)(a); *State of UP v. Raj Narain* 1975 SC 865

⁴ Right to Information Act, 2005

⁵ S.P Sathe, *Administrative Law* (7th edn, Oxford University Press 2014)

store and provide access to information.⁶When viewed as an administrative reform rather than a purely technological development, e-governance has the capacity to reduce procedural delays, limit discretionary control over information, and integrate transparency into routine bureaucratic functioning.

At the same time, the incorporation of digital governance within the RTI framework has progressed unevenly across administrative institutions. Differences in digital access, variations in technological capacity among departments, unresolved concerns relating to data protection and informational privacy, and persistent bureaucratic practices continue to restrict the effectiveness of technology driven transparency initiatives.⁷These limitations necessitate a careful examination of whether existing legal and policy frameworks are adequately equipped to support the meaningful use of digital tools for advancing openness and accountability. In this context, the present study critically examines the role of e-governance in strengthening the implementation of the Right to Information Act, 2005 in India, evaluates the institutional and legal constraints affecting digital transparency, and proposes policy oriented measures to align digital governance practices with the democratic objectives underlying the RTI framework.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Right to Information and Democratic Transparency

Scholarly engagement with the Right to Information Act, 2005 has largely positioned the legislation as a foundational instrument for promoting transparency within democratic governance. Studies by Chandana Suba⁸and Tanvi Goyal⁹conceptualise RTI as a mechanism that enables citizens to access state held information and participate more meaningfully in governance processes. These works emphasise the normative value of transparency in reducing administrative secrecy and strengthening public trust in institutions. However, their analyses remain primarily focused on the recognition of RTI as a legal right, offering limited insight into the administrative processes through which information is generated, managed, and disseminated in practice.

Similarly, Manisha Kumari¹⁰ and Prasanna Kumar Routray¹¹ highlight the contribution of RTI

⁶ Department of Personnel and Training, *RTI Online Portal Guidelines*, Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, *Digital India Programme*.

⁷ Mamta Patel and Sapna Bansal, 'Transparency and Accountability in Governance: A study of Balance between Right to Information and Right to Privacy' (2025).

⁸ Chandana Suba, 'Right to Information and Its Relationship with Good Governance A Critical Analysis in India' (2024).

⁹ Tanvi Goyal, 'Right to Information act a tool for Good Governance' (2024).

¹⁰ Manisha Kumari, 'Right to Information A tool of Good Governance' (2024).

¹¹ Prasanna Kumar Routray, 'RTI A tool of Good Governance' (2022).

to good governance by facilitating openness and public oversight over administrative action. While these studies acknowledge the importance of transparency as a governance principle, they often proceed on the assumption that RTI mechanisms operate effectively once legally established. As a result, insufficient attention is paid to the structural and institutional factors that condition access to information within public administration.

B. RTI And Administrative Accountability

A second stream of literature examines RTI primarily as a tool for strengthening administrative accountability. Scholars such as Yasmeen Sodwala and Nasim Alam argue that RTI laws compel public authorities to justify their decisions and actions, thereby fostering greater responsiveness and reducing arbitrariness in governance.¹² This body of work treats RTI as an accountability mechanism capable of recalibrating the relationship between the State and citizens through increased transparency.

At the same time, several authors identify persistent challenges that undermine the accountability potential of RTI. Jharasri Paikaray¹³ and Masood Ahmad Sheikh along with his coauthors point to procedural delays, inadequate record maintenance, and weak enforcement mechanisms as recurring impediments to effective implementation.¹⁴ While these studies acknowledge administrative resistance and inefficiency, they largely attribute implementation failures to individual or institutional reluctance, without sufficiently examining how broader systemic reforms could address these deficiencies.

C. Digital Governance and Transparency

Literature directly engaging with the role of digital governance in enhancing transparency remains relatively limited. Mamta Patel and Sapna Bansal provide an important contribution by examining the relationship between transparency, accountability, and emerging governance tools, while also highlighting concerns relating to privacy and data protection.¹⁵ Their work signals a growing recognition of the relevance of digital mechanisms within transparency frameworks, though the analysis remains largely conceptual in nature.

Sangeeta Thakur similarly acknowledges the role of digital platforms in empowering citizens

¹² Yasmeen Sodwala and Nasim Alam, 'The Impact of Right to Information Laws on Governance and Accountability' (2022).

¹³ Jharasri Paikaray, 'Right to Information and Good Governance: An Analysis' (2023)

¹⁴ Masood Ahmad Sheikh, S Victor Devasirvadham and Uzma Padder, 'Right to Information Act: A tool for Good Governance' (2023)

¹⁵ Mamta Patel and Sapna Bansal. 'Transparency and Accountability in Governance: A Study of Balance between Right to Information and Right to Privacy' (2025).

and strengthening democratic participation.¹⁶ However, the discussion of digital governance in such studies is often ancillary to broader democratic concerns and does not engage substantively with the operational impact of technology on RTI processes. Consequently, digital governance is frequently treated as a supplementary development rather than as an institutional transformation capable of reshaping administrative transparency.

III. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK: TRANSPARENCY, DIGITAL GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Transparency and accountability are central principles of public administration and democratic governance. In administrative law, transparency denotes the obligation of public authorities to disclose information concerning their functions, procedures, and decision making processes, thereby enabling public scrutiny of state action. Accountability operates in close association with transparency, requiring institutions to justify their conduct and remain answerable for the exercise of public power. Together, these principles function as institutional safeguards against arbitrariness and misuse of authority.

Within the Indian constitutional framework, access to information has been judicially recognised as an essential component of the freedom of speech and expression guaranteed under Article 19(1)(a) of the Constitution. The Supreme Court has repeatedly emphasised that meaningful participation in governance presupposes an informed citizenry, and that secrecy in public administration undermines democratic legitimacy. The Right to Information Act, 2005 gives statutory expression to this constitutional understanding by converting a fundamental entitlement into a legally enforceable obligation imposed upon public authorities.¹⁷

The RTI Act establishes a comprehensive legal framework aimed at institutionalising transparency across the administrative apparatus. Its application extends to governmental bodies and institutions substantially financed by the State, thereby ensuring broad coverage. A significant feature of the Act is its emphasis on proactive disclosure. Section 4 mandates public authorities to publish information relating to organisational structure, functions, decision making norms, and relevant records. This represents a deliberate shift from a reactive model of disclosure to one that places a positive duty upon the State to make information available in the public domain.¹⁸ Judicial interpretation has reinforced the importance of proactive disclosure as a means of reducing opacity and limiting the need for individual information requests.¹⁹

¹⁶ Sangeeta Thakur, 'Right to Information Empowering Citizens and Strengthening Democracy' (2023).

¹⁷ Constitution of India, art 19(1)(a); *State of UP v. Raj Narain* AIR 1975 SC 865.

¹⁸ Right to Information Act, 2005, s 4.

¹⁹ *Central Board of Secondary Education v. Aditya Bandopadhyay* (2011) 8 SCC 497.

The Act further provides procedural mechanisms through which citizens may seek information by designating Public Information Officers who are legally bound to respond within prescribed time limits. These procedural safeguards, coupled with appellate remedies, are intended to ensure administrative responsiveness and prevent undue delay. However, the effectiveness of these mechanisms remains closely dependent upon the quality of record management systems maintained by public authorities.²⁰

Oversight of the RTI framework is vested in the Central and State Information Commissions, which function as quasi-judicial bodies empowered to adjudicate disputes, issue binding directions, and impose penalties for noncompliance.³ While these institutions play a crucial role in enforcing transparency obligations, both scholarly commentary and judicial observations have highlighted challenges such as delays in adjudication, enforcement deficits, and administrative noncompliance with Commission orders.

Judicial decisions have significantly shaped the contours of the RTI regime. Courts have consistently affirmed that the Act must be interpreted in a manner that advances transparency and accountability while balancing competing interests such as confidentiality and informational privacy.²¹ This jurisprudence reflects an attempt to harmonise transparency obligations with broader constitutional values and administrative efficiency.

From a conceptual perspective, accountability within public administration cannot be secured through legal norms alone. Scholars have noted that accountability mechanisms are weakened when administrative systems are fragmented, discretionary, or opaque.²² In this context, digital governance assumes particular relevance. E governance refers to the use of information and communication technologies by public authorities to improve administrative processes, standardise record management, and enhance institutional transparency. When understood as an administrative reform rather than a purely technological initiative, digital governance has the potential to support transparency obligations by facilitating efficient information management and reducing discretionary control.

This study situates e governance as an enabling institutional mechanism within the RTI framework. Rather than treating technology as an end in itself, the analysis focuses on how digital governance structures interact with legal norms to influence transparency and accountability in practice. By examining this interaction, the paper assesses whether the integration of digital governance mechanisms strengthens the operational effectiveness of the

²⁰ Right to Information Act, 2005, ss 18 to 20.

²¹ *Girish Ramchandra Deshpande v. Central Information Commissioner* (2013) 1 SCC 212.

²² S.P. Sathe, *Administrative Law* (7th edn, Oxford University Press 2014).

RTI regime and contributes to accountable public administration.

IV. E-GOVERNANCE AND THE OPERATIONALISATION OF RTI: OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS

The effective functioning of the Right to Information Act, 2005 depends not only on the existence of statutory disclosure obligations but also on the administrative systems through which information is generated, preserved, and disseminated. Existing scholarship on RTI implementation has consistently highlighted that delays, fragmented record management, and discretionary administrative practices undermine the realisation of transparency in practice.²³ In this institutional context, e-governance assumes particular relevance as a mechanism capable of addressing several structural weaknesses identified in RTI literature.

Digital governance initiatives contribute to RTI implementation by restructuring internal information management processes within public administration. Electronic record keeping and systematic digitisation reduce dependence on manual documentation and enhance traceability of administrative decisions. As noted by scholars examining RTI and accountability, poor record maintenance has remained a persistent obstacle to effective information disclosure.²⁴ Digital systems, by standardising record creation and storage, offer a means to improve compliance with statutory disclosure requirements under the RTI Act and reduce administrative discretion at the stage of information retrieval.

The introduction of online RTI portals further strengthens accessibility and procedural transparency. Digital platforms enable applicants to submit requests, monitor their progress, and receive information without physical engagement with administrative offices. Literature emphasising RTI as a tool of good governance has underlined accessibility and responsiveness as critical determinants of public trust in administrative institutions.²⁵ By reducing procedural barriers and limiting opportunities for discretionary delay, e-governance platforms enhance the predictability and efficiency of information delivery.

E-governance also plays a significant role in advancing proactive disclosure obligations under Section 4 of the RTI Act. Government websites and online disclosure mechanisms allow public authorities to place information relating to organisational structure, functions, budgets, and decision making processes in the public domain. Judicial interpretation has affirmed that

²³ Chandana Suba, 'Right to Information and Its Relationship with Good Governance: A Critical Analysis in India' (2024); Manisha Kumari, 'Right to Information: A tool of Good Governance' (2024).

²⁴ Jharasri Paikaray, 'Right to Information and Good Governance an Analysis' (2023).

²⁵ Prasanna Kumar Routray, 'RTI: A tool of Good Governance' (2022).

proactive disclosure operates as a preventive transparency mechanism that reduces reliance on individual RTI applications while strengthening institutional openness.²⁶ Scholarly engagement with digital transparency further indicates that systematic online disclosures can expand public access to information when supported by coherent administrative practices.²⁷

At the same time, existing literature cautions against viewing digital governance as a self-executing solution to transparency deficits. One of the most significant constraints identified is the persistence of the digital divide. Studies focusing on RTI and citizen empowerment note that unequal access to digital infrastructure, limited digital literacy, and uneven internet penetration continue to exclude large segments of the population from benefiting fully from online transparency mechanisms.²⁸ Without inclusive access measures, digital RTI platforms risk reinforcing existing inequalities rather than alleviating them.

Administrative capacity constraints further limit the effectiveness of digital transparency initiatives. Literature examining RTI and governance highlights inadequate institutional preparedness, insufficient training of personnel, and incomplete digitisation of records as recurring challenges.²⁹ The transition to digital systems requires not only technological infrastructure but also organisational adaptation and capacity building. In the absence of such reforms, e-governance initiatives may replicate inefficiencies present in traditional administrative systems.

Bureaucratic resistance also emerges as a significant theme in RTI scholarship. Authors examining the relationship between RTI and governance point to entrenched administrative cultures that prioritise discretion and secrecy, often resulting in superficial compliance with transparency obligations.³⁰ Even where digital tools are available, such resistance may manifest in delayed responses, incomplete disclosures, or strategic reliance on statutory exemptions.

Concerns relating to privacy and data protection further complicate the integration of e-governance with RTI implementation. Mamta Patel and Sapna Bansal draw attention to the growing tension between transparency obligations and the protection of personal information in digital governance frameworks.³¹ As administrative information becomes increasingly

²⁶ Right to Information Act, 2005, s 4; *Central Board of Secondary Education v. Aditya Bandopadhyay* (2011) 8 SCC 497.

²⁷ Mamta Patel and Sapna Bansal, 'Transparency and Accountability in Governance: A Study of Balance between Right to Information and Right to Privacy' (2025).

²⁸ Sangeeta Thakur, 'Right to Information Empowering Citizens and Strengthening Democracy' (2023).

²⁹ Jharasri Paikaray, 'Right to Information and Good Governance An Analysis' (2023).

³⁰ Chandana Suba, 'Right to Information and Its Relationship with Good Governance: A Critical Analysis in India' (2024); Manisha Kumari, 'Right to Information: A tool of Good Governance' (2024).

³¹ Mamta Patel and Sapna Bansal, 'Transparency and Accountability in Governance: A Study of Balance between Right to Information and Right to Privacy' (2025).

digitised, the absence of clear legal and policy harmonisation between transparency norms and privacy considerations has contributed to uncertainty in administrative practice.

Finally, existing literature highlights limitations in oversight mechanisms. While Information Commissions possess statutory authority to enforce RTI obligations, delays in adjudication and weak enforcement of Commission orders continue to undermine accountability.³² In the digital context, these limitations reduce the deterrent effect of non-compliance and weaken incentives for institutional reform.

Taken together, the literature indicates that while e-governance offers significant opportunities to strengthen RTI implementation, its effectiveness is contingent upon inclusive access, institutional capacity, administrative willingness, and coherent legal frameworks. Digital governance must therefore be understood as an enabling institutional mechanism rather than a substitute for accountability. Addressing these constraints is essential to ensure that e-governance initiatives contribute meaningfully to the objectives of transparency and administrative accountability envisioned under the Right to Information Act, 2005.

V. LEGAL AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ALIGNING E GOVERNANCE WITH RTI OBJECTIVES

The preceding analysis establishes that the integration of e governance with the Right to Information Act, 2005 cannot be achieved through technological adoption alone. While digital platforms have the potential to improve access to information, meaningful administrative transparency requires complementary legal reforms and policy interventions that address institutional and structural limitations identified in existing scholarship.

A primary legal reform lies in strengthening statutory and regulatory emphasis on systematic digital record management. Although Section 4 of the RTI Act mandates proactive disclosure, it does not prescribe uniform standards for digitisation, classification, or archival practices. Scholarly analyses of RTI implementation consistently identify inadequate record maintenance as a central impediment to effective information disclosure.³³ Administrative law scholars have similarly noted that accountability mechanisms weaken when information systems remain fragmented and discretionary.³⁴ The formulation of binding guidelines specifying digitisation protocols, indexing standards, and periodic audits of records would reduce administrative

³² Yasmeen Sodwala and Nasim Alam, 'The Impact of Right to Information Laws on Governance and Accountability' (2022).

³³ Jharasri Paikaray, 'Right to Information and Good Governance: An Analysis' (2023).

³⁴ S.P. Sathe, *Administrative Law* (7th edn, Oxford University Press 2014).

discretion and enhance consistency in information access across public authorities.

Institutional capacity building represents a second critical policy priority. Literature on RTI and governance highlights that inefficiencies in information disclosure often arise from limited training and inadequate administrative preparedness rather than from the absence of legal obligations.³⁵ Public Information Officers and departmental staff should therefore receive regular training in digital record handling, online disclosure practices, and statutory compliance under the RTI framework. As noted in comparative governance studies, technology driven reforms succeed only when supported by corresponding human and institutional capacity.³⁶

Ensuring inclusive access to digital RTI mechanisms is equally essential. Studies examining RTI and citizen empowerment caution that digital governance initiatives may inadvertently exclude marginalised communities due to disparities in digital literacy, infrastructure, and awareness.³⁷ From a governance perspective, transparency reforms that do not account for social inequality risk reproducing existing power asymmetries.³⁸ To address this concern, e governance policies should incorporate assisted access centres, multilingual digital interfaces, and offline facilitation mechanisms that enable citizens to engage with RTI processes irrespective of technological constraints.

Greater legal clarity is also required to balance transparency obligations with privacy and data protection concerns in the digital governance context. Mamta Patel and Sapna Bansal highlight the increasing tension between the right to information and the protection of personal data as administrative records become digitised.³⁹ Courts and scholars alike have recognised that transparency cannot be pursued in isolation from informational privacy and dignity.⁴⁰ Clear interpretative guidelines delineating the scope of permissible disclosure and standardising the application of exemptions under the RTI Act would reduce uncertainty for public authorities and promote consistent decision making.

The effectiveness of oversight mechanisms must likewise be strengthened to ensure compliance with digital transparency obligations. Existing literature notes that delays in adjudication and weak enforcement of Information Commission orders undermine the deterrent effect of the RTI

³⁵ Manisha Kumari, 'Right to Information: A Tool of Good Governance' (2024).

³⁶ Mark Bovens, Robert E Goodin and Thomas Schillemans(eds), *The Oxford Handbook of Public Accountability* (Oxford University Press 2014).

³⁷ Sangeeta Thakur, 'Right to Information Empowering Citizens and Strengthening Democracy' (2023).

³⁸ Amartya Sen, *The Idea of Justice* (Penguin 2009).

³⁹ Mamta Patel and Sapna Bansal, 'Transparency and Accountability in Governance: A Study of Balance between Right to Information and Right to Privacy' (2025).

⁴⁰ *Girish Ramchandra Deshpande v. Central Information Commissioner* (2013) 1 SCC 212.

regime.⁴¹ Strengthening the institutional capacity of Information Commissions through adequate staffing, technical expertise, and enforcement support would reinforce accountability and incentivise administrative compliance in the digital era.

Finally, e governance initiatives should be explicitly aligned with transparency and accountability objectives rather than being treated solely as service delivery reforms. Scholars examining RTI and governance emphasise that digital reforms are most effective when embedded within accountability oriented administrative frameworks rather than efficiency driven models alone.⁴² A coherent policy approach that situates e governance as an institutional support mechanism for RTI implementation would contribute to sustainable and meaningful transparency outcomes.

Taken together, these recommendations underscore the need for a holistic governance approach that integrates legal reform, institutional capacity building, inclusive access strategies, and effective oversight. Such an approach is essential to ensure that digital governance strengthens, rather than merely digitises, the transparency framework established under the Right to Information Act, 2005.

VI. CONCLUSION

The Right to Information Act, 2005 represents a significant legislative intervention aimed at embedding transparency and accountability within Indian public administration. Rooted in the constitutional recognition of access to information as an integral component of the freedom of speech and expression, the Act was intended to recalibrate the relationship between the State and its citizens by limiting administrative secrecy and enabling public oversight.⁴³ However, as demonstrated in this study, the effectiveness of the RTI framework has been constrained by persistent administrative challenges, including fragmented record management, procedural delays, and discretionary control over information.⁴⁴

This paper has examined the role of e governance as an institutional mechanism capable of addressing several of these limitations. Digital governance initiatives such as electronic record management systems, online RTI portals, and technology based proactive disclosures possess the potential to restructure administrative information flows and enhance compliance with

⁴¹ Yasmeen Sodwala and Nasim Alam, 'The Impact of Right to Information Laws on Governance and Accountability' (2022).

⁴² Chandana Suba, 'Right to Information and Its Relationship with Good Governance: A Critical Analysis in India' (2024).

⁴³ Constitution of India, art 19(1)(a); *State of UP v Raj Narain* AIR 1975 SC 865.

⁴⁴ S.P. Sathe, *Administrative Law* (7th edn, Oxford University Press 2014); Chandana Suba, 'Right to Information and Its Relationship with Good Governance A Critical Analysis in India' (2024).

statutory transparency obligations.⁴⁵ When understood as an administrative reform rather than a purely technological intervention, e governance can contribute to improved accessibility, reduced procedural barriers, and strengthened administrative accountability within the RTI regime.

At the same time, the analysis highlights that digital governance is not a self executing solution to transparency deficits. Existing literature underscores that structural constraints including the digital divide, uneven institutional capacity, bureaucratic resistance, and unresolved tensions between transparency and informational privacy continue to undermine the effectiveness of digital transparency initiatives.⁴⁶ Without inclusive access strategies, sustained capacity building, and coherent legal frameworks, the digitisation of governance processes risks replicating existing inefficiencies rather than remedying them.

The study therefore argues for a holistic approach to strengthening RTI implementation through e governance. Legal clarity on digital record management standards, institutional capacity building within public authorities, inclusive access to digital RTI mechanisms, and effective oversight by Information Commissions are essential for aligning technological reforms with the democratic objectives of the RTI Act. Such an approach recognises that transparency is sustained not by technology alone, but by institutional commitment, accountability oriented governance structures, and respect for constitutional values.

In conclusion, e governance should be viewed as an enabling institutional framework that can reinforce the transformative potential of the Right to Information Act, 2005 when embedded within supportive legal, administrative, and policy environments. By situating digital governance within the broader objective of democratic accountability, this paper contributes to contemporary discourse on transparency and offers a principled framework for strengthening the practical enforcement of the right to information in the digital era.

⁴⁵ Mark Bovens, Robert E Goodin and Thomas Schillemans (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of Public Accountability* (Oxford University Press 2014).

⁴⁶ Mamta Patel and Sapna Bansal, 'Transparency and Accountability in Governance A Study of Balance between Right to Information and Right to Privacy' (2025).