

URGENT APPEAL FROM CAMPAIGN TO SAVE RTI ACT

CALL FOR A NATIONAL REFERENDUM

Dear Friends,

As you know the Central Cabinet has approved in great haste and *without any public consultation *a set of 7 amendments to the Right to Information Act, to prevent amongst others, the access to file notings, which records the deliberative process (who made what recommendation, and why). Even beyond notings, no information will be given out while the decision making process is on. This will severely restrict the right and cripple the Act. The Bill to amend the RTI Act, is likely to be placed in the current, monsoon session of Parliament.

There are multiple protests and strong voices being raised against these amendments. Since this is a denial of a basic democratic right, there is an urgent need for a very strong voice of protest, from all of us as responsible citizens.

We have come together under the banner of the "Campaign to save the RTI Act." One important initiative is to seek the people's mandate, a "referendum" on the "Proposed Amendments to the Right to Information Act". We feel it would immensely strengthen the protest and build public opinion. People from all over the country could poll on a simple ballot saying yes /no to the amendments (suggested design of Ballot boxes and Ballot paper are being sent as attachments) Through this procedure the people could directly approve or reject a measure proposed to be passed by parliament, without consulting us- the citizens.

We hope that we will be able to get a clear message across to the Government, that any proposed amendment to the present Right to Information Act will be absolutely unacceptable. This "Referendum" could also serve as a warning to all MPs that if the amendments are passed, the people will express their anger through their votes in the next general election.

Details of Referendum

- First round of counting will take place in the evening at the Dharna Sthal on 17th August 2006 followed by several rounds of counting in the next days

- Results of Referendum held ay different places should reach the Dharna Sthal latest by 10 am, 23rd August 2006
- For any further details please contact Ravi / Hari Om at Dharna Sthal (Phone-65121727)