

Right to Know

May 12, 2025 • vajiramandravi.com



Right to Know Latest News

Recently, the Supreme Court of India quashed a Delhi High Court order that had directed the Wikimedia Foundation (which hosts Wikipedia) to remove a user-created page and associated discussion.

Supreme Court's Observations

- The ruling reaffirmed that the **“Right to Know”** is a **basic right** under **Article 19(1)(a)** (Freedom of Speech and Expression) and **Article 21** (Right to Life and Personal Liberty).

Significance of the “Right to Know”

- The **Right to Know** is essential to enable citizens to:
 - **Participate in public discourse and democratic processes,**
 - **Access justice** effectively, and
 - Hold public authorities **accountable.**

- The judgment reinforced that **public discussion and criticism of courts** is a **legitimate aspect of democracy** and must not be equated with contempt without careful consideration.

Constitutional Significance of the Right to Know

- **Under Article 19(1)(a) - Freedom of Speech and Expression:** This article ensures the **right to express opinions** through speech, writing, and other media. As per the **Supreme Court**, this includes the **Right to Know** about:
 - **Government activities**
 - **Public decision-making**
 - **Court proceedings**
- The Court reiterated that **freedom of expression** covers the **right to receive information**, which is vital for **democracy**.
- **Under Article 21 - Right to Life and Personal Liberty:** The **Right to Know** is also implicit in **Article 21**, as it enables citizens to:
 - **Access justice**
 - **Participate in governance**
 - **Live with dignity** through informed decision-making
- The **Supreme Court** in the **Menaka Gandhi Case (1978)** expanded Article 21 to include a **broad range of rights**, now including access to truthful public information:
 - **Right to live with dignity,**
 - **Right to livelihood,**
 - **Right to privacy,**
 - **Right to shelter,**
 - **Right to a clean environment,**
 - **Right to information** (including **Right to Know**).

Right to Know FAQs

Q1: What is the 'Right to Know' in India?

Ans: The Right to Know is an implicit part of the Right to Freedom of Speech and Expression under Article 19(1)(a) of the Constitution, empowering citizens to access public information.

Q2: Which Act operationalised the Right to Know in India?

Ans: The Right to Information (RTI) Act, 2005 formalised this right, allowing citizens to demand transparency and accountability from public authorities.

Source: TH

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