Research paper

‘Adopting the RTI Act as a mechanism to fight corruption to promote effective aid delivery in India’

Preeti Kannan
SID: 309302196
Contents

1. Introduction

2. India’s interaction with aid and corruption
   2.1 India and aid
   2.2 Corruption in aid in India

3. Good governance and aid effectiveness: How important is tackling corruption for aid to be effective in recipient countries?
   3.1 Aid effectiveness: The endless debate
   3.2 The relationship between good governance and corruption in aid

4. To what extent if any can the Right To Information (RTI) Act be used as a mechanism to fight corruption to promote aid effectiveness in India?
   4.1 The access to information movement
   4.2 Scope of the legislation
   4.3 Adopting the RTI Act for foreign aid

5. Conclusion
Section 1: Introduction

Good governance has become a buzzword in development today. Fighting corruption, raising accountability and promoting transparency are increasingly perceived as being indispensable to the notion of good governance. The concept of good governance is gaining popularity and is being used unsparingly in the international community to promote development, economic and social security and peace. There is realisation that robust engagement with the civil society is at the heart of good governance and citizen participation has become a recurring theme because of the inherent impact policies can have on citizens – the ultimate beneficiaries. This research paper examines the different scholarly debates around good governance and aid effectiveness. It draws parallels to similar debates in the Indian context by using the newly-enacted Right to Information Act (RTI) as a case study for good governance since corruption, lack of accountability and transparency have been often cited as impediments to governance.1

The RTI Act, which started as a small social justice movement in a village in Rajasthan and became a nation-wide campaign for a legislation,2 “empowers Indian citizens to seek any accessible information from a public authority and makes the government and its functionaries more accountable and responsible”.3 Barely two and a half years after its enactment in 2005, over two million requests for information4 were filed under the act, reflecting the overwhelming interest in the legislation and the potential to increase the political influence of the marginalised population.5 The RTI Act’s utility in the past five years has centred heavily on seeking information on a range of issues including development programmes, anti-poverty schemes and public projects to expose corrupt practices and claim rights. This paper broadens the scope of the RTI Act and makes original contributions to ongoing deliberations on governance in the Indian sub-continent by exploring the possibility of ‘adopting the RTI Act as a mechanism to fight corruption to promote effective aid delivery’ since aid recipient countries also have a major responsibility to improve governance.6

---

1 A Roberts, “A Great and Revolutionary Law? The First Four Years of India's Right to Information Act,” (Suffolk University Law School, 2010).
4 Roberts, "A Great and Revolutionary Law? The First Four Years of India's Right to Information Act."
5 Ibid.
The research moves seamlessly from section to section, tracing the history of aid in India, examining the deep-rooted problem of corruption in the society and its impact on development projects, probing the concept and origins of governance and aid effectiveness in the international community by relying on the available literature and finally attempting to position the RTI Act as a model for good governance. It also raises questions on what constitutes governance, looks at the different debates on the fundamental issue of aid effectiveness. The arguments presented in this research make no claims to be exhaustive instead they offer a selective view of the broader debates in the international and Indian community on aspects of governance and aid effectiveness. Ultimately, this paper contributes to the discourse on foreign aid in India and initiate further discussions on the community’s role in ensuring aid is effective.

Section 2: India’s interaction with aid and corruption

2.1 India and aid

Since independence in 1947 from the British rule, India has been heavily reliant on Official Development Assistance (ODA), also known as foreign aid or external assistance. In fact, India has “always been one of the largest recipients of net economic aid”, despite the desire to not be dependent on aid, stemming from its policies of non-alignment and anti-colonialism. The United States, Japan, Germany and the United Kingdom have been key donors to the Aid-India Consortium, formed in 1958 to assist India to address its growth needs in different sectors. The nature of foreign assistance has evolved drastically in India where initially, aid was provided to improve food

---

7 OECD defines ODA as: Flows of official financing administered with the promotion of the economic development and welfare of developing countries as the main objective, and which are concessional in character with a grant element of at least 25 percent (using a fixed 10 percent rate of discount). By convention, ODA flows comprise contributions of donor government agencies, at all levels, to developing countries (“bilateral ODA”) and to multilateral institutions. ODA receipts comprise disbursements by bilateral donors and multilateral institutions. Lending by export credit agencies—with the pure purpose of export promotion—is excluded (OECD website 2010).

8 ODA, foreign aid and external assistance are used interchangeably in this paper.


security through the US-India bilateral food assistance programme, PL-480. 12 Aid has been a source for balance of payments to meet foreign exchange requirements, while also supporting reform initiatives in the social and economic sectors. External aid before the 1990s covered about “18 percent of India’s total gross budgetary support for the central government ministries’ development programmes and assistance to states”. 13 Most of the aid from the World Bank, Japan, Germany, the UK and the US – the major donors, was pumped into infrastructural projects like power, coal, transport and communications. 14 Foreign assistance helped usher in the Green Revolution of the 1960s, 15 improving India’s food security. Between 1951 and 1956, India received about Rs 1430 crores 16 (approx US$ 92.19 million) as aid and as of 2008, aid stands at US$ 2.10 billion. 17

Over the years, the role and focus of aid has dramatically changed in India, especially post the economic liberalisation. NK Singh, member of the Planning Commission, told a conference in Mexico in 2003:

> Foreign assistance has lost its critical relevance in the national development paradigm as a means of balance of payment support in the post-1991 era. Twelve years after the commencement of significant economic reforms, foreign assistance is now increasingly a set of sector-specific programmes aimed at more direct development initiatives. 18

The sectoral focus implied a shift from financing infrastructural development to aid being used in key areas like health and education because of India’s commitment to meet the Millennium Development Goals. 19 External assistance has supplemented the national government’s funding of state and central initiatives 20 and “Roughly 20 percent of aid flows are accounted by the social sectors”. 21 In 2003, India made some dramatic announcements – it would provide bilateral

---

13 Ibid.
15 Singh, “Aid Management India Country Report”.
16 Ibid.
18 Singh, “Aid Management India Country Report”.
19 “Position Paper on External Assistance Received by India,” (New Delhi: Department of Economic Affairs, 2008).
20 Domestic funding of programmes like the Sarva Siksha Abhiyan or the universal elementary education programme is supplemented by World Bank, UNICEF, Netherlands and other international donors. Similarly, the World Bank assists three state governments to implement rural water supply and sanitation projects (Singh 2003).
21 Singh, “Aid Management India Country Report”.

5
assistance to other countries, it would accept aid only from five countries and most importantly, it would not accept any more tied aid. Bilateral donors could henceforth channel aid only through NGOs, the UN or other multilateral agencies. This signalled a change in its stand from an ‘aid-taker to an aid-giver, following which it has been actively providing financial assistance to other developing and neighbouring countries like Nepal, Bhutan and Afghanistan. Interestingly, researchers observe three important ideas influencing India’s attitude towards aid: assistance is given for political or economic purposes and that can be a highly effective means of improving relations, the wrong type of assistance is counter-productive and conditional or tied can be degrading to the recipient. India’s interaction with aid as a recipient has conditioned its thinking as a donor and its political aspirations for providing assistance is to gain support for its bid to gain a permanent seat on the UN Security Council. The next section looks at governance hurdles India faces.

2.2 Corruption in India

Time and again corruption has been identified as the biggest challenge in development in India. The culture of corruption has become well entrenched in the society and is expected to be a part of any transaction. In the past, people paid a bribe or an additional fee to get an illegal benefit, but nowadays public servants have to be bribed even for a legitimate demand or for services citizens are entitled to. A number of government commissions have noted corruption as being systematic in India because of the concentration of power among bureaucrats and politicians, “who flourished on the basis of mutual dependence and institutional abuse of power structures”. Many trace the growth of corruption to its colonial roots. They believe that culture of secrecy in governance, which

---

22 Donor countries include Japan, the UK, Germany, the US and Russia, besides the European Union. One of the reasons for its decision to cherry pick donors is because of its resentment of countries’ criticism of India’s nuclear tests in 1998 and the Gujarat communal riots of 2002. It also repaid loans to the tune of US$ 4.6 billion (Price 2005).
24 Ibid.
25 Ibid.
27 India has been providing assistance since 1964 and that has totalled to US$ 2 billion until 2004 (Price 2005).
29 ———, “India’s Aid Dynamics: From Recipient to Donor?.”
began during the British rule and continues now, has perpetuated corruption, where large amount of public money is diverted from development projects and welfare schemes for private use by the authorities.\textsuperscript{33} Highlighting the prevalence of corruption and its impact on development, former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi estimated that for every rupee spent on anti-poverty programmes by the government only 15 per cent went to intended beneficiaries,\textsuperscript{34} where the remaining 40 per cent was spent on administrative costs and nearly 45 per cent “disappeared into the corruption column”.\textsuperscript{35} Hence, it comes as little surprise that India is ranked 84 among 180 countries in the Corruption Perception Index,\textsuperscript{36} which measures the perceived level of public-sector corruption around the world.

In India, the continuing existence of corruption has been attributed to the weak system of governance, the societal structure based on caste and kinship, the differences in the states of development, nepotism, society’s tolerance of amassing of wealth as it is viewed as a “symbol of competence”,\textsuperscript{37} growing consumerism and the practice of the dowry system.\textsuperscript{38} Corruption is also believed to be a result of policy distortion, institutional incentives and governance.\textsuperscript{39} Interestingly, the emphasis of tolerance and sense of forgiveness in Hinduism, the dominant religion in India, has also been cited as a reason for the passive acceptance of corruption.\textsuperscript{40} Experts say people are not concerned with corruption on higher levels, instead worry about corruption “at the cutting edge level of administration”\textsuperscript{41}, which they experience on a daily basis. A detailed empirical research in 2007-08, focussing on 22,728 households living Below the Poverty Line (BPL), found that they paid about Rs 9,000 million (approx US$ 192 million) in bribes to access basic and need-based public services.\textsuperscript{42} This survey, one of the largest undertaken in India, found the police to be the most corrupt. It also found that in “two-thirds of the instances bribes were paid to an official or staff in the concerned service”,\textsuperscript{43} where one-third of the bribes for basic services like getting a new ration card,

\begin{itemize}
\item\textsuperscript{33} MM Ansari, “Impact of Right to Information on Development: A Perspective on India’s Recent Experiences” (paper presented at the UNESCO Lecture, Paris, May 15 2008).
\item\textsuperscript{35} Ibid.
\item\textsuperscript{38} Vittal, Corruption in India: The Roadblock to National Prosperity.
\item\textsuperscript{39} Sondhi, "Combating Corruption in India: The Role of Civil Society".
\item\textsuperscript{40} Vittal, Corruption in India: The Roadblock to National Prosperity.
\item\textsuperscript{41} Ibid.
\item\textsuperscript{42} Centre for Media Study Transparency International India, "Tii-Cms India Corruption Study 2007 with Focus on Bpl Households: National Report," (CMS India Transparency International India, 2008).
\item\textsuperscript{43} Ibid.
\end{itemize}
new connection, new installation or school admission.44 A similar study conducted in 2005 on 14, 405 respondents found that citizens had paid bribes to the tune of Rs 21, 068 crores (approx US$ 4517 million) to avail public services.45 The two studies sets up corruption as a major obstacle in governance in India and underline the importance of laws like the RTI Act in facilitating “greater transparency in public spending”.46

2.3 Corruption in aid in India

Since foreign assistance often supplements existing government programmes and projects at the national and state level,47 the research relies on available literature on corruption in welfare schemes aimed at poverty alleviation. Examining instances of corruption in food aid and humanitarian aid would give a sense of the urgency and necessity to address corruption in foreign aid. In the absence of extensive academic literature on corruption in aid, particularly in the area of tsunami, the research examines news reports published in the Indian media at that time.

Food For Work (FFW)

A scam involving food aid, meant for millions of poor farmers in the Southern state of Andhra Pradesh following a drought in the state, received considerable attention in the media in 2002. After “allegations of corruption in the supply of rice intended for poor farmers and agricultural labourers”,48 the Indian government, which had allocated more than three million metric tons of rice, enough to feed 20 million workers for nearly a year,49 stopped aid for the FFW scheme. Under this programme, rice was meant to be given to farmers in exchange for working on developmental projects. However, it was found that members of the ruling party in the state and other officials were selling the rice back to the Food Corporation of India, an agency of the central government, and adding fictitious names of labourers to claim more rice.50 When some villagers did try to

44 Ibid.
45 Transparency International India, "India Corruption Study 2005 to Improve Governance," (New Delhi: Centre for Media Studies, 2005).
46 Ibid.
47 Singh, "Aid Management India Country Report".
48 O Farooq, "India Corruption Row Halts Food Aid," BBC, August 23 2002.
49 P Deshingkar, C Johnson, and J Farrington, "State Transfers to the Poor and Back: The Case of the Food-for-Work Program in India " World Development 33, no. 4 (2005).
50 Farooq, "India Corruption Row Halts Food Aid."
telephone the local police, contractors cut off their telephone lines.\textsuperscript{51} Authorities were found to have wielded unfair influence in the employment of contractors, the selection of beneficiaries, wage-setting and for payments.\textsuperscript{52} The Overseas Development Institute and Management Accounting of NGOs concluded that “Design faults, administrative mismanagement and local politics created conditions that were conducive to large-scale misappropriation of resources meant for the poor”\textsuperscript{53}

**Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS)**

The ICDS, financially and technically assisted by UNICEF and the World Bank,\textsuperscript{54} was initiated in 1975 in response to the growing problem of malnutrition among children. Its goals are to improve the nutrition and health of children up to the age of six, reduce infant mortality, school dropout and educate families, particularly mothers, on the need for balanced diets for children. The programme,\textsuperscript{55} implemented through *Anganwadis* or community-based institutions, has been punctuated with complaints of corruption and failure to reduce deaths, which continues is as high as two million children a year.\textsuperscript{56} Investigations show that the food meant for children is often sold by contractors\textsuperscript{57} and workers or funds meant to purchase food siphoned off.\textsuperscript{58} Experts have also called for banning the practice of packaging food for children because of the malpractices involved,\textsuperscript{59} besides being unhealthy. There has been a strong demand for immediate governance reforms and transparency\textsuperscript{60} in the ICDS programme to prevent children’s deaths and avoid malnutrition.

**The Indian Ocean Tsunami**

The 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami saw unprecedented international response and invited “unseen scales of generosity”.\textsuperscript{61} In the wake of an “avalanche of aid”,\textsuperscript{62} concerns of misappropriation of funds

\begin{itemize}
    \item \textsuperscript{51}Deshingkar, Johnson, and Farrington, "State Transfers to the Poor and Back: The Case of the Food-for-Work Program in India ".
    \item \textsuperscript{52} P. Ewins et al., "Mapping the Risks of Corruption in Humanitarian Action," (Overseas Development Institute and Management Accounting for NGOs, 2006).
    \item \textsuperscript{53} Ibid.
    \item \textsuperscript{54} M Huff-Russle et al., "Assessment of Decentralized Food Models in India’s Icds Program," (Washington: Academy for Educational Development, 2007).
    \item \textsuperscript{55} ICDS has received funding from CARE through USAID and the World Food Programme since its inception and is in fact an extension of the US government’s food aid programme that began in 1950 (Russel et al 2007).
    \item \textsuperscript{56} M Bhandari, “Impoverished Kids Starved, Deprived as Corruption Rules,” CNN-IBN 2008.
    \item \textsuperscript{57} NC Saxena and N Srivastava, "Icds in India: Policy, Design and Delivery Issues," *IDS Bulletin* 40, no. 4 (2009).
    \item \textsuperscript{58} Moribund ICDS, "A Study on the Icds and Child Survival Issues in Madhya Pradesh," (Bhopal: Vikas Samvad Sanket - Center for Budget Studies, 2009).
    \item \textsuperscript{59} Saxena and Srivastava, "Icds in India: Policy, Design and Delivery Issues."
    \item \textsuperscript{60} ICDS, "A Study on the Icds and Child Survival Issues in Madhya Pradesh."
    \item \textsuperscript{62} E Armstrong, "The Tsunami's Windfall Women and Aid Distribution " in *Meridians* (Indiana University Press, 2006).
\end{itemize}
and transparency of aid flows arose, leading to a meeting in Indonesia to curb corruption with six of the worst affected countries. 63 While countries like Sri Lanka have been censured for large scale corruption, 64 lapses in relief and reconstruction aid were considered to be lesser of an issue in India due to media vigilance. 65 In the state of Tamil Nadu, “tsunami victims alleged that junior government officials were taking a sizeable cut of compensation payments.” 66 The disaster has been unique in the sense not just because of the overwhelming aid that was involved, but also because of the number of complaints of embezzlements against both Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and government authorities. In one instance, officials from the Church of South India were accused and later arrested for swindling over seven crores (approximated US$ 1.5 million), donated by an American NGO for the rehabilitation of tsunami victims. 67 The media observed that NGOs and social workers may have taken advantage of the generosity of individual donors and charities and cashed in on the grief of millions. 68

Having established that corruption in development programmes is preventing Indians from accessing services, the next section looks at the discourse on governance and its relation to aid.

Section 3: Good governance and aid effectiveness: How important is tackling corruption for aid to be effective in recipient countries?

3.1 Aid effectiveness: The endless debate

There are many dimensions to the good governance and aid effectiveness debate and this section consolidates existing views in the international aid community, while attempting to wed the conceptual concerns around aid effectiveness to governance. The impact of aid hinges on the quality of governance 69 and “the quality of a country’s governance system is a key determinant of the ability

---

to pursue sustainable economic and social development”. Experts opine that without improving governance, aid will not have the desired impact. However, before examining the role of governance, it is imperative to look at the complex topic of aid effectiveness. Though this research is based on the assumption that development assistance helps in poverty alleviation, ongoing conceptual concerns around aid effectiveness are hard to overlook because of the massive outpouring of studies – theoretical and empirical, in the past thirty years. Aid effectiveness, arguably, is one of the most controversial and extensively researched issues. A lot of the criticism on aid has centred on Africa and the question constantly asked is has, “One trillion US$ in development assistance over the last several decades made African people better off?” One of the earliest critics of foreign aid was Peter Bauer, who argued that aid was “likely to obstruct” development, urging donors to take cognisance of the relative ineffectiveness of foreign aid to promote “higher living standards in poor countries”. He dismissed any analogy between the success of Marshall Aid and aid programmes for developing countries, arguing that while the former helped restore the economies of Western Europe, the latter was attempting to develop the economies of recipient countries. Bauer also maintained that aid provided little incentive for governments to adopt good policies.

After decades of engagement with foreign aid, a significant drop in aid allocation by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries was observed in 1997, reflecting the widespread pessimism in the aid community. “After a generation of aid giving, politicians and the public in donor countries had become somewhat weary with it and cynical about what aid had achieved, or could achieve”. A year later, a World Bank study concluded that “foreign aid in different times and different places has been highly effective, totally ineffective and everything in between”. The study, placing a strong emphasis on governance, urged a rethink on aid and attempted to provide a blueprint for the future, in response to the disillusionment in the aid community. World Bank economists Burnside and Dollar argued that on an average “aid had little

74 Ibid.
impact on growth” and their study further resonated with the Bank’s findings, linking foreign aid to sound economic policies. They observed that “making aid more systematically conditional on the quality of policies would likely increase its impact on developing country growth” and concluded that aid had a positive impact in good environments and was ineffective in countries with poor governance and policies. These two studies also gave further impetus to conditionality or tied aid, which will be explored later. Besides paving the way for discussions on good governance, the Burnside and Craig research provided the basis for policy recommendation to increase foreign aid, which was heavily contested by economist and aid sceptic William Easterly. On his part, Easterly does not completely negate the benefits of foreign aid, instead advocates improving the quality of aid first. He notes that the aim of transferring money from high income people to very poor people remains a worthy cause, despite the experiences of the past. “The goal is simply to benefit some poor people some of the time...Improving quality of aid should come before increasing quantity,” he argues. Easterly also suggests adopting a piecemeal approach to aid as an alternative to economist Jaffrey D Sachs’ Big Push theory, which he dismisses as being Utopian.

The foreign aid discourse would be incomplete without examining the views of economist Jeffrey Sachs, who has provided the strongest clarion call for increased aid in recent times. Besides propagating a drastic increase in foreign aid to achieve the MDGs, he seeks to attack, what he terms, “conventional rich-world wisdom about Africa”, which believes aid to the continent has simply gone down the drain. He fuelled the aid debate further when his ‘Big Push’ theory recommended doubling foreign aid to about US$ 100 billion a year and then nearly doubling it again by 2015. Sachs’ theories have, no doubt, stirred a hornet’s nest and Harvard-educated African economist Moyo makes the most scathing attack on aid proponents like him. Terming aid to Africa as “the single worst decision of modern developmental politics,” she dismisses aid effectiveness as a myth. A Zambian by birth, she attempts to be the authentic African voice in the aid discourse, urging donors, historically from the West, to permanently shut the taps of aid to Africa, which according to her is addicted to aid. She asserts that the continent was better off without aid and offers “a road less travelled in Africa...and aid-free solution to development”. Her alternative to foreign aid includes

---

80 Burnside and Dollar, "Aid, Policies and Growth."
81 Ibid.
83 Ibid.
86 Moyo, Dead Aid.
87 Ibid.
88 Ibid.
attracting Foreign Direct Investments, increasing trade internationally and regionally, banking on
micro-credit, encouraging remittances from Africans living overseas and increasing domestic savings.
Importantly, she advocates accountability, transparency, removing bureaucracy and curbing
corruption as an alternative to aid.

3.2 The relationship between good governance and corruption in aid

Despite the ongoing disputes around the fundamental issue of aid effectiveness, there exists
consensus among aid advocates and critics that corruption, lack of accountability and absence of
transparency are major deterrents to foreign aid delivery. There has been a growing cognisance in
the aid world that tackling corruption is central for aid to have its desired results and good
governance is the antidote to corruption. Therefore, good governance has become a recurring
theme in foreign aid. It has been identified as a key factor for enhancing aid effectiveness by
academics and the World Bank, where researchers placed controlling corruption and government
accountability as two of the six distinguishing dimensions of good governance.89 A World Bank
report illustrated how foreign aid has been an unmitigated failure in some countries, notably the
Democratic Republic of Congo and Tanzania, where heads of states channelled development aid in
to their personal bank accounts.90 At the 2002 Monterrey Conference in Mexico, the former World
Bank President noted, “We have learned that corruption, bad policies, and weak governance will
make aid ineffective”.91 Economists Paul Collier and David Dollar, who worked for the Bank,
observed that corruption can significantly impair aid effectiveness92 and weaken aid programmes.
Economist Moyo cites a World Bank study which found nearly 85 per cent of aid money was either
diverted or channelled for ‘unproductive’ or ‘grotesque’ ventures and asserts how aid fuels
corruption in many African regimes.93 While in theory aid is meant to be a vehicle for development,
in practice it is far from this, because countless examples have demonstrated how assistance can be
hampered by unscrupulous government officials.94 The fact that the discourse on governance
occupied an important place in the global agenda was echoed by former UN Secretary-General Kofi

89 Santiso, “Good Governance and Aid Effectiveness: The World Bank and Conditionality.”
91 Easterly, "Can Foreign Aid Buy Growth?.”
92 Collier and David, "Development Effectiveness: What Have We Learnt?.”
93 Moyo, Dead Aid.
94 The World Bank, in Assessing Aid, cities examples of Zaire and Tanzania, where government officials
swindled billions of aid dollars meant for development.
Annan, when he stated, “Good governance is perhaps the single most important factor in eradicating poverty and promoting development.”

In reality, the concept of good governance is relatively new and remains largely undefined in the absence of an “unambiguous and operational definition”. Governance, in fact, appeared on the World Bank’s agenda only after a 1989 Bank report cited a crisis in governance for the failure of aid in Sub-Saharan Africa. In 1995, it characterised poor governance that undermined development as “arbitrary or unenforced and unaccountable government bodies susceptible to abuse or inefficient use of power”. Towards the end of the millennium, the institution however urged donors to confine lending to countries with sound economic policies and good institutional environment or have in place policy and governance reforms, in what is better known as selectivity in the aid world. These recommendations, however, condoned the practice of conditional or tied aid and the Bank’s linking of foreign aid to conditionality has drawn considerable flack not just because of the nature of conditionality donors were imposing, but also on the principle of the approach. Economist Carlos Santiso argued that the Bank’s traditional approaches to good governance was ‘misguided’ and concluded that “conditionality is not the appropriate approach to strengthening good governance in developing countries”. Importantly, the Bank’s researchers have alluded to instances where aid had fuelled “incompetence, corruption and misguided policies” echoing concerns in aid community that corruption undermined aid and aid was fuelling corruption. Critics of aid have often cited instances of corruption as reasons to convince the donor community to plug the flow of aid. Moyo, for instance, cites the examples of Zaire and Nigeria, asserting that development assistance aids corruption, props up corrupt governments and pushes countries further into poverty. Corruption has been termed the chief enemy of foreign aid, reducing “the effectiveness of aid-funded development projects”. Hence, tackling financial irregularities and

---

96 Santiso, "Good Governance and Aid Effectiveness: The World Bank and Conditionality."
100 Browne says conditionality can undermine domestic accountability, instead of enhancing governance, by imposing policy direction from outside (Browne 2006).
101 Santiso, "Good Governance and Aid Effectiveness: The World Bank and Conditionality."
103 Ibid.
104 Transparency International estimates Mobutu of Zaire and Nigerian President Sani Abacha to have swindled to the tune of US$ 5 billion of foreign aid.
ensuring aid effectiveness hinge on the conditions in the recipient country primarily on governance and politics.  

Academics, who have sought to answer what constitutes good governance, note that the shift from the notion of governance to good governance “introduces a normative dimension addressing the quality of governance.”  

Surely, the notion of good governance has gained momentum over the years as a response to the instances of corruption in aid. However, the concept would have to be expanded to include political dimensions rather than just economic dimensions, which is what the World Bank’s approach has been confined to. The friction has been a source of intense debate as internal governance targets the state’s power, political structures, and democracy. The Bank’s apolitical stand has been a source of contention among donors and scholars, who have criticised this approach maintaining that political and economic aspects of good governance are indispensable.

Academics note that the relationship between governance and democracy is layered with controversies and there is no consensus in the aid world on how good governance can be promoted from the outside, without addressing issues inside a state. Santiso maintains, “Good governance although theoretically distinct from democracy, often substantially overlaps with it in practice.” Precisely due to this inherent tension between political and economic aspects of governance, there has been a growing emphasis on internal governance incorporating citizen participation for development. The idea first surfaced in 1997 in the World Bank’s Development Report and was later highlighted in its subsequent reports where the Bank noted the role of civil society, observing, “Effective aid in this case often involves supporting civil society either to pressure the government to change or to take service provision directly into its own hands”. There is growing awareness on the importance of engaging with the civil society and reliance on a country’s internal mechanisms to tackle corruption and raise accountability. There have been instances where donors have been able to address governance issues, particularly related to tackling corruption, by supporting

---

108 Santiso, "Good Governance and Aid Effectiveness: The World Bank and Conditionality."
109 Nanda, "The Good Governance Concept Revisited."
110 Santiso, "Good Governance and Aid Effectiveness: The World Bank and Conditionality."
111 Ibid.
112 Ibid.
113 Ibid.
114 As per the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness (2005, p.3), one of the commitments of recipient countries is taking the lead in co-ordinating aid at all levels in conjunction with other development resources in dialogue with donors and encouraging the participation of civil society and the private sector.
115 The Declaration also encourages donors to using a country’s existing institutions and systems for effective aid.
institutional reforms “that increase accountability and transparency and reduce monopoly and discretion in the allocation and management of public resources”.  

A possible approach that could be explored by donors is by supporting existing citizen movements calling for governance reforms and available internal mechanisms and home-grown solutions within recipient countries. Citizen participation is central to governance and the “umbilical relationship between state and the civil society” can determine the pace and direction of developmental efforts. The next section looks at the adoption of such an internal mechanism and home grown solution – the RTI Act, as a possible tool for civil society to tackle corruption since:  

Ultimately, the most effective systemic check on corruption would be where the citizen herself or himself has the right to take the initiative to seek information from the state, and thereby to enforce transparency and accountability.  

Section 4: To what extent if any can the Right To Information (RTI) Act be used as a mechanism to fight corruption to promote aid effectiveness in India?  

4.1 The access to information movement  

Recipient countries shoulder significant responsibility in ensuring aid has the necessary impact. As discussed, good governance broadly entails fighting corruption, eliminating fraud and ensuring transparency for aid to be effective. The examples of corruption in aid in India illustrate an urgent need for an internal strategy and the support of the civil society to initiate change from within. It is in this milieu of corruption, absence of accountability and transparency that this paper explores the adoption of the newly-enacted RTI Act, which extends to the whole of India, except the state of Jammu and Kashmir, to foreign aid inflows and outflows.  

In order to understand why the act is considered a landmark legislation and a “watershed moment in the history of public governance in India”, it is important to look at the right to information movement and how it gained momentum over the last three decades as a result of advocacy by  

116 “Good Governance, Aid Modalities and Poverty Reduction: From Better Theory to Better Practice.”  
117 Sondhi, "Combating Corruption in India: The Role of Civil Society".  
120 Roberts, "A Great and Revolutionary Law? The First Four Years of India’s Right to Information Act.”
NGOs and the civil society. The right to information campaign began in the state of Rajasthan with the Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sangathan (MKSS), an NGO. The organisation was keen to tackle deep-seated corruption, hold the state accountable for minimum wage regulations and ensure the availability of subsidised food and other essential commodities through the government’s Public Distribution System.\footnote{The South Asian, "History of the Right to Information," Commonwealth Human Rights Institute, <http://www.thesouthasian.org/archives/2006/post.html>}. It found that local authorities were billing the central and state government while underpaying workers and selling subsidised food grains and other commodities, meant for the poor, in open markets.\footnote{Jenkins and Goetz, "Accounts and Accountability: Theoretical Implications of the Right-to-Information Movement in India."} Authorities were also inflating the costs of public work projects, using poor quality materials, over billing the state and engaging in other malpractices, which the MKSS recognised could be controlled only through by accessing official documents including balance sheets, employment registers and bills submitted for the purchase of materials.\footnote{Ibid.} The organisation’s focus was on access to information to verify government records of allocation of funds and quantities of essential commodities for people, on paper, with what had really reached them.\footnote{According to Jenkins and Goetz (1999), the MKSS is known for its innovative collective method analysing approach, where in a series of public hearings or jan sunwais, details of official expenditure records are read allowed to assembled villagers through village assemblies of gram sabhas. The direct form of social audit helped people realise that they had been listed for anti-poverty schemes and had never received payment.} For cross-checking records and holding the government accountable, the NGO, alongside other civil society organisations, demanded the state government permit photocopies of government records.\footnote{Certified copies of documents are important to register prima facie cases of corruption and to give poor, illiterate people time to seek assistance to interpret them.} A national campaign, along with other anti-corruption NGOs and interested groups, for the Right to Information seeking legal access to government documents was launched in 1996, countering the Official Secrets Act of 1923.\footnote{Jenkins and Goetz, "Accounts and Accountability: Theoretical Implications of the Right-to-Information Movement in India."} After years of rallying, the national Freedom of Information Bill was introduced in the Parliament in 2002 and later replaced by the RTI in 2005.\footnote{Asian, "History of the Right to Information."} According to the Indian government, the RTI is an:

\begin{quote}
Act to provide for setting out the practical regime of right to information for citizens to secure access to information under the control of public authorities, in order to promote transparency and accountability in the working of every public authority, the constitution of a Central Information Commission and State Information Commissions and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.\footnote{Centre, "Right to Information: A Citizen Gateway."}
\end{quote}

The Act adds:

\begin{enumerate}
\item Jenkins and Goetz, "Accounts and Accountability: Theoretical Implications of the Right-to-Information Movement in India."
\item Ibid.
\item According to Jenkins and Goetz (1999), the MKSS is known for its innovative collective method analysing approach, where in a series of public hearings or jan sunwais, details of official expenditure records are read allowed to assembled villagers through village assemblies of gram sabhas. The direct form of social audit helped people realise that they had been listed for anti-poverty schemes and had never received payment.
\item Certified copies of documents are important to register prima facie cases of corruption and to give poor, illiterate people time to seek assistance to interpret them.
\item Jenkins and Goetz, "Accounts and Accountability: Theoretical Implications of the Right-to-Information Movement in India."
\item Asian, "History of the Right to Information."
\item Centre, "Right to Information: A Citizen Gateway."
\end{enumerate}
Democracy requires an informed citizenry and transparency of information which are vital to its functioning and also to contain corruption and to hold governments and their instrumentalities accountable to the governed.129

All public authorities or government bodies and non-governmental organisations, financed by the government, are covered by this act, which empowers Indian citizens “to seek any accessible information,130 from a public authority and makes the government and its functionaries more accountable and responsible”,131 by filing applications with the Central Public Information Officer. The applicant should be supplied with an answer between 48 hours132 to thirty days, depending on the nature of the information and can file appeals if no response is received.

4.2 **Scope of the legislation:**

Presently, there appears to be a lot of optimism among academics, NGOs and the civil society on the potential of the act to improve governance. Despite being barely five years old, it is already being extensively used by Indians, from different economic and social strata and age groups, to obtain information and track public expenditure. The fact that over two million requests were received within a couple of years of the act coming into force, illustrates its reach and gives a glimpse of its potential to engage with policy and policy makers. With corruption being viewed as one of the biggest “obstacles in the efficient delivery of development resources to the poor in developing countries,”133 an empirical study concluded that the RTI negatively impacted corruption and its statistical impact on curbing corruption was quite significant. The study, conducted in 20 states over a span of three years, found that the act “reduces corruption in an average state by 18.5 per cent points”.134 The authors found that the act “explains approximately 62 percent of the actual decline in corruption in Bihar over the period 2005 to 2008”,135 which is rather a large impact considering Bihar is one of the most corrupt states. The study concluded that the legislation makes significant contribution in controlling corruption, enhancing the quality of public goods and services,

129 Ibid.
130 As per the act, the right includes inspection of work, documents and records, taking notes, extracts or certified copied of documents or records, taking certified samples of material held by the public authority or held under the control of the public authority.
131 Coopers, "Final Report: Understanding the Key Issues and Constraints in Implementing the RTI Act."
132 If the information sought concerns the life or liberty of a person, the information shall be provided within 48 hours (RTI Act 2005).
133 Jenkins and Goetz, "Accounts and Accountability: Theoretical Implications of the Right-to-Information Movement in India."
135 Ibid.
empowering citizens and by breaking the informational monopoly of public officials. “It prevents corrupt public officials from misusing this information to advance their own interest. On the other hand, it provides the government with more power and public support for conducting top down audit of corrupt departments,” Bhattacharyya and Jha conclude.

The ability to access information from the state, which was previously shrouded in secrecy and bureaucracy – legitimised by the colonial Official Secrets Act 1923, and direct form of social audit has led to a new-found sense of empowerment among citizens, who are willing to resort to the law to claim their rights, as the study indicates. The media, which has been a powerful ally for the civil society, has reported numerous stories on how ordinary citizens have evoked the act to secure their right to food through the PDS, ensure their children received the promised midday meals under the ICDS centres at anganwadis, enable pensioners receive their dues, help people realise their basic rights to water and tackle corruption in many instances. The legislation does, to an extent, satisfy some internationally agreed criterions of good governance in aid delivery including curbing corruption, accountability and transparency. It is a classic example of a grassroots struggle and demand for participatory democracy that translated into a nation-wide policy change.

Clearly, the demand for the people’s right to information, emerging from a people’s struggle and campaign, is far more incisive than the comparatively limited assertion that the Right to Information is contained within the Constitutional right to the freedom of expression. Because it is rooted in action, facets of the issue have been thrown up which have altered its discourse in India.

While there is a link between the contemporary debates on governance in India and the international community and the right to access information, academics caution transparency need not necessarily result in accountability. However, Jenkins and Goetz conclude that since transparency aims to make procedures clear, remove discretionary control and ensure accountability, their interchangeable use and their “utility as a euphemism for a means of combating corruption” needs to be critically examined.
corruption” are justified. They observe that debates on transparency in the public sphere in India revolve around the right to information and acknowledge a growing awareness in the society’s conscience on the inextricable link between “opacity and the perpetuation of everyday forms of corruption”, reflecting the growing convergence of these issues in governance.

Though rights are indivisible and interconnected, there has been scepticism associated with the right to information movement because of its portrayal as having little relevance to the poor and marginalised as “they do not possess the means required to actualise it: time, literacy, appropriate forms of collective action...” In other words, civil and political rights hold some value only when social and economic rights have been realised. However, NGOs like the MKSS have identified and positioned the act as being indispensable in realising socio-economic rights like the right to food. They have been able to emphasise the potential role of the right to information – an archetype first general civil and political right, as a procedural right to combat corruption and secure socio-economic rights. “Even the poorest of Indians are using the RTI to secure everything from repairing roads and sewers to getting passports, subsidised food, school places and old age pensions”. The next section examines the possible expansion of the act to fight corruption to promote aid effectiveness.

4.3 Adopting the RTI Act for foreign aid:

By outlining the scope and the utility of the RTI Act, this paper explores the possibility of using the act to improve governance in foreign aid and make valuable contribution to the debates on the legislation. The above sections demonstrate the potent role of the RTI Act in improving governance in the Indian public sphere and also highlight the opportunities the act presents for the various stakeholders – mainly civil society. Since India continues to receive significant ODA for its development and is emerging as a donor, Indian citizens possess the ‘right to information’ on how and where aid is being spent in India and how Indian aid is being spent overseas. India has agreed to adhere to the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness in 2006, requiring it to improve aid

---

143 Ibid.
144 Ibid.
145 Ibid.
147 SN Sharma, "India Finally Agrees to Paris Declaration on Aid," The Economic Times 2006.
effectiveness and the quality of aid. The Declaration clearly outlines the roles and responsibilities of recipient and donor countries and India, as a signatory, has pledged its commitment to enhance accountability on its development policies, strategies and performance. It has also pledged to act against “Corruption and lack of transparency, which erode public support, impede effective resource mobilisation and allocation and divert resources away from activities that are vital for poverty reduction and sustainable economic development.” The Declaration therefore establishes a clear framework for the involvement of civil society, strengthening governance and improving development performance. Hence, India is morally bound to involve and engage Indian citizens in disbursing external aid within India and with Indian aid abroad.

Since aid supplements the government’s expenditure by financing major infrastructure projects and social sector projects, the money, received in the form of loans or grants, is then channelled to different states based on their requirements. Every year, during the annual Union Budget, the Indian Ministry of Finance announces the external aid it seeks to receive and the assistance it plans to give to other countries. While the information on aid inflows and outflows are available on government websites, there is a need for further scrutiny by the civil society and CSOs to curb any malpractices involved in the utilisation of aid. Assistance to India is used to supplement development and in poverty alleviation programmes like the FFW, ICDS, which have been shown to be fraught with corruption. A Finance Ministry report in 2008 highlights the skewed aid distribution among states and the low utilisation of aid as major obstacles in aid delivery. It observed that prosperous states like Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal and Gujarat received between 80 to 90 percent of aid, while poorer states like Bihar, north eastern and special category states received negligible external assistance. While revealing an obvious disparity and inequality in aid distribution, it offers no explanation on why poorer states, in dire need of development, are being neglected or the reasons for continued aid to richer states. However, the government claims an increased utilisation of aid from 50 percent in the 1990s to over 90 percent today, by facilitating states’ access to

---

148 India was pressured into accepting the Declaration because it receives considerable aid and is also a major donor (Economic Times 2005).

149 "The Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and the Accra Agenda for Action".

150 Ibid.

151 Ibid.

152 "Position Paper on External Assistance Received by India."

153 Ibid.


155 India’s external assistance is detailed on the Ministry of Finance’s website, while its lending to other developing countries is detailed on the Ministry of External Affairs’ website.

156 "Position Paper on External Assistance Received by India."

157 Ibid.

21
resources. It also boasts of achieving aid effectiveness because of its ability to incorporate foreign aid into domestic programmes.\textsuperscript{158}

The Indian government argued at a conference in 2003 in Mexico that it has been relatively “under aided”\textsuperscript{159} in comparison to the rest of the developing world, where the aid flows to India stood at an average USD 2.5 a year when compared to the USD 8 developing country average.\textsuperscript{160} It is true that India’s economic growth over the years has largely influenced its decision in recent years to reject tied aid and pick and choose its donors based on its economic and political needs. However, the fact remains that India has been heavily dependent on aid post independence and while it is pursuing a conscious policy to become less reliant on foreign assistance, it continues to receive significant multilateral and bilateral assistance from the World Bank, Asian Development Bank, Japan, UK, Germany, the United States, to name a few. Since external assistance plays a crucial role in not just meeting the commitments of MDGs but also contributing effectively to the overall growth of the country, this paper underlines the need for greater public scrutiny and a potential role for civil society and NGOs to be involved in the process of disbursing aid by employing the RTI. Series of government reports on external assistance reflect an understanding among policy makers on the key priorities of the country and for the need to utilise foreign aid to align international commitments with India’s own development strategies. However, it is a well known fact that policies and priorities on paper do not necessarily translate into action that enables the betterment of people.

Similarly, Indian assistance to countries including Nepal, Bhutan, Afghanistan and other countries contributes to the recipient countries’ development. While India decried tied aid, it has shown little scruples in imposing conditions on recipient countries, which has been rightly criticised as being hypocritical.\textsuperscript{161} India’s changing stance on foreign aid has not gone completely unnoticed and there has been conflicting views in the media. While an article in the Economic and Political Weekly criticised India’s position on conditional aid, an opinion voiced in the Times of India urged the adoption of ‘new mindsets in the face of new realities’.\textsuperscript{162} EPW also questioned the country’s decision to become a donor when economic realities in the country demand otherwise. The debate in the media, even if not exhaustive, demonstrates an interest in the country’s foreign aid priorities and future direction, proving an impetus to the question this research seeks to raise – To what extent can the RTI be used as a mechanism to increase government accountability to promote effective aid delivery?

\textsuperscript{158} Singh, “Aid Management India Country Report”.
\textsuperscript{159} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{160} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{162} Ibid.
Being an active democracy with a robust civil society, there is an obvious need for increased engagement with foreign aid to increase government accountability on the programmes and projects that external aid is financing internally and overseas. The changing nature of the Indian economic landscape and its economic policies provide immense opportunity for the community to scale up its interaction with the present and future policies of the country. The RTI advocates the notion of social audit\(^{163}\) while maintaining its core mandates of raising accountability, ensuring transparency and fighting corruption. The uniqueness of the act, as demonstrated in the sections above, is its bottom-up approach rooted in its grassroots movement. By presenting the debates around RTI, the paper argues that the poor are important actors, who can rely on their civil and political rights to realise their social and economic rights and can consequentially shape the future of the country. Since external aid to India impacts development, the act will serve as an important mechanism to pressure the government to pay attention to the needs of its own people by alleviating poverty, improving literacy and other aspects of the society that will contribute to the overall social and economic growth of the country. Intellectuals fear India’s political expansionism, refusal to heed to criticism of its human rights record and double standards in providing conditional aid to developing countries are placing it in par with the United States and China.\(^{164}\) Hence, given the political and economic changes, the legal framework in which the RTI Act operates, the moral responsibilities enshrined in the Paris Declaration and the notions of participatory democracy, there seems to be an environment conducive for the RTI to be adopted as a mechanism to fight corruption and promote aid effectiveness in India, as a recipient and donor country.

The Indian government at a recent conference in Mexico conceded that aid effectiveness for “enabling growth and development has come to depend more on how well it is integrated with domestic policies and economic conditions”.\(^{165}\) Since foreign aid is being incorporated with government spending on development projects,\(^{166}\) it is considered public expenditure allowing for the employability of the act to seek information. The Act mandates disclosure of:

1. The budget allocated to each of its agency, indicating the particulars of all plans, proposed expenditures and reports on disbursements made.\(^{167}\)
2. The manner of execution of subsidy programmes, including the amounts allocated and the details of beneficiaries of such programmes.\(^{168}\)

---

\(^{163}\) Jenkins and Goetz, "Accounts and Accountability: Theoretical Implications of the Right-to-Information Movement in India."

\(^{164}\) "Aid: Old Morality and New Realities."

\(^{165}\) Singh, "Aid Management India Country Report".

\(^{166}\) Ibid.

\(^{167}\) Centre, "Right to Information: A Citizen Gateway."

\(^{168}\) Ibid.
Since public programmes fall under the purview of the RTI, it can be concluded that citizens can track foreign aid to India and India’s assistance abroad. NGOs and CSOs that receive government funding also fall within the purview of the act, thereby enabling public scrutiny of projects. Since the act has already made it possible for people to engage with policy by strengthening ongoing anti-corruption efforts, it can be argued that the act holds strong potential to allow the community to engage with India’s foreign aid policies in the long term. This law, as a model of good governance, can achieve much more than what donor countries can through conditional aid because it matches, to an extent, with donor countries’ perception of good governance.

Section 5: Conclusion

The RTI, which has been compared to the United States’ Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), holds the allure of a corruption-free society and showcases India as being on the cusp of a “socio-economic revolution”. In the international sphere, the right to information was viewed predominantly as an administrative governance reform in the 1990s, but is now increasingly viewed as a fundamental human right. The Indian scenario is also evolving to recognise that access to information is a basic human right. However, studies undertaken in the past two years reveal a number of pitfalls in the implementation of the act including a weakness in the enforcement mechanisms, low public awareness on the existence of the act and its utility, constraints in filing applications like inconvenient submission channels, high levels of dissatisfaction with the responses to the appeals, failure to respond on time and other logistical constraints on the government’s part to provide information. Once an application is made to the Public Information Officer (PIO) and a timely response isn’t received, the applicant can file an appeal with a senior officer but senior officers were found to be sympathetic to junior officers and “tend to go along with them”, thereby discouraging the applicant from pursuing the issue further. The government has not been able to

---

169 Ibid.
170 This provision in the act is particularly useful to avoid misappropriation during humanitarian disasters like the tsunami. However NGOs that do not receive government funding do not fall under the act’s purview.
171 Roberts, "A Great and Revolutionary Law? The First Four Years of India’s Right to Information Act."
172 Coopers, "Final Report: Understanding the Key Issues and Constraints in Implementing the Rti Act."
173 Ibid.
174 Roberts, "A Great and Revolutionary Law? The First Four Years of India’s Right to Information Act."
175 Coopers, "Final Report: Understanding the Key Issues and Constraints in Implementing the Rti Act."
176 Roberts, "A Great and Revolutionary Law? The First Four Years of India’s Right to Information Act."
comply with the enthusiasm on the part of citizens to demand information, thereby leading to pending applications and long delays.\textsuperscript{177}

While the above issues highlight the problems faced by citizens in using the RTI Act in general, the problem of awareness is particularly relevant in the attempt to adopt it for foreign aid. The available literature on aid in India reveals a low, if not negligible, interest and awareness on India’s foreign aid policies. It is true that the concept of human development is directly linked to human rights and a “rights-based approach demands participation in governance and development, which guaranteed access to information can provide”.\textsuperscript{178} But, the lack of knowledge on the existence of the RTI Act compounded with the near non-existent public discourse on the issue of aid throw up significant challenges. There is also no provision under the act to protect the identity of applicants, thereby compromising their safety. Incidents of RTI applicants getting roughed up\textsuperscript{179} because of their decision to take on establishments or authorities have surfaced in the media.\textsuperscript{180} This will no doubt deter applicants, from taking an active interest in the governance of the country. Academics also caution against overestimating the impact of the act on governance in India, warning that it cannot be the sole answer to corruption.\textsuperscript{181} The most important setback, if implemented, could be the proposed changes to the RTI Act, “to avoid frivolous or vexatious requests”,\textsuperscript{182} among other things. There have been fears this would dilute the transparency legislation and defeat the purpose of the act.\textsuperscript{183}

However, the fact remains that the law is still very nascent and five years is a short time to achieve significant change. People’s familiarity with the act will grow only with time. As more people realise the potential of the act, there is scope for it to become a powerful tool to curb corruption and ensure accountability in the effective delivery of foreign aid. “If, through persistence and innovation,

\textsuperscript{177} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{178} D Sankhari, "Right to Information as a Human Right and Developments in India," (Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative, 2000).
\textsuperscript{179} The Times of India reported a story of a man being thrashed for seeking accountability from government authorities on public money spent on a development project (Times of India 2009, <http://www.rtiindia.org/forum/23941-man-thrashed-seeking-info-under-right-information.html>.
\textsuperscript{181} Jenkins and Goetz, "Accounts and Accountability: Theoretical Implications of the Right-to-Information Movement in India."
the RTI can be made to work effectively, then India will become a model for dozens of other countries in developing world". 184

184 Jenkins and Goetz, "Accounts and Accountability: Theoretical Implications of the Right-to-Information Movement in India."
Bibliography


27


"Position Paper on External Assistance Received by India." New Delhi: Department of Economic Affairs, 2008.


"India’s Aid Dynamics: From Recipient to Donor?". London: Chattam House, 2004.


Sharma, SN. "India Finally Agrees to Paris Declaration on Aid." The Economic Times, 2006.


Vannan, G. "Was the Tsunami a Godsend for Some?" Express Buzz, 2009.


