

Better Governance for better Government

In association with the Collaborating Chambers, Bombay First was privileged to have Mr. Shailesh Gandhi, an IIT alumnus and proponent of the RTI Act, address a small but interested audience on '**How You Can Make Our Government Work**' on Tuesday, 18th March at the Sir Dinshaw Petit International Convention Hall at the BSE.

Our second speaker for the evening was Mr. Sanjay Ubale, (Retd) IAS who spoke about the 'Government Servants Regulation of Transfers and Prevention of Delay in Discharge of Official Duties Act, 2005' which is the corollary to the RTI Act.

First & Foremost brings you excerpts of this enlightening session.

Mr. Shailesh Gandhi pointed out that our Government was not truly democratic because it was not for the people, by the people and of the people. Since, it was formed by an electoral process it is wrongly described as a democracy but at best it is a defective elective process. Several governmental positions are obtained through patronage rather than through merit or by election. The laws are not in favour of the public but in fact empower the government.

What is more disturbing than a corrupt government is an ineffective one and we, as citizens should demand a more effective and efficient government. The government is one organisation which does not recognise merit, does not incentivise performance and encourages inaction. But we can demand a change in the systemic flaws of governance and it is up to us all to engage with the government and demand an efficient government.

According to **Mr. Sanjay Ubale**, the RTI empowers the private citizen but does not offer an effective method of redressal. But the Government Servants Regulation of Transfers and Prevention of Delay in Discharge of Official Duties Act, 2005 which was passed in 2006 remains largely underutilised because no one knows about it. Every citizen has the right to demand a swift and speedy solution to his problems and by the provisions of this Act can actually demand it. This is because each Government department has to have a Citizen's Charter stipulating timelines for different jobs, failing which the official is liable to be punished.

He urged members of the audience to volunteer to spread the word, fine tune the roughly drafted Act to engage with the Government with at least 1000 applications made under this Act.