

# Multimedia Training Kit

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## Group Discussions and Case Studies

### Freedom of expression and freedom of information

Collection of Cases specific to India

#### Contents

Scenario 1 – Online debates about the PK Movie .....	2
Additional information.....	2
Questions for Discussion .....	2
Scenario 2 – Right to Information and Open Data Initiative India .....	3
Additional Information .....	3
Questions for Discussion .....	3



## Scenario 1 – Online debates about the PK Movie

**PK**, a satirical science fiction comedy film was released in India in December, 2014. Promotional material released before the commercial release of the film showed the lead actor posing almost nude with a radio covering his genitals. This poster created a furore online as well as offline. A Writ Petition filed in the Supreme Court of India demanded blocking the release of the film. This petition was dismissed by the Court.

After its release, this debate was fuelled by what some Hindu nationalist organisations being enflamed by content that they felt was against their religious sentiments. A Public Interest Litigation (PIL) was filed in the Delhi High Court sought blocking the exhibition of the film on these grounds. While this PIL was rejected by the Court, the online debate raged.

Spokespersons for various Hindu nationalist organisations and other private individuals raised questions about the financing of the film, BJP spokesperson Subramanian Swamy tweeted “*Who financed the PK film? According to my sources it is traceable to Dubai and ISI. DRI must investigate*”

### Additional information

- <http://lobis.nic.in/dhc/RSE/judgement/12-01-2015/RSE07012015CW1122015.pdf>
- <https://twitter.com/swamy39/status/549500620118319104>
- <http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/bajrang-dal-members-vandalise-theatres-screening-pk-in-ahmedabad/article6735632.ece>
- <http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/bajrang-dal-members-vandalise-theatres-screening-pk-in-ahmedabad/article6735632.ece>
- <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/indiahome/indianews/article-2725459/Let-art-remain-art-SC-judge-refuses-ban-film-based-vulgar-nudity.html>

### Questions for Discussion

1. Do you believe that

## Scenario 2 – Right to Information and Open Data Initiative India

The Indian Government passed the Right to Information Act in 2005 with the aim to provide an avenue for citizens to access information about government departments and agencies. It also provides a mandate to government bodies to be proactive about disclosing certain information.

The RTI Act, 2005 has had its fair share of supporters and detractors. Its overall impact still remains a matter for considerable debate.

The National Data Sharing and Accessibility Policy was approved by the Government in early 2012 to encourage and govern the publication of government created and owned datasets, from various organisations, in open data formats and accessible through a single portal.

The Open Government Data Platform of India was launched later that year to collect and publish government data. The Portal has also rich mechanism for citizen engagement. Besides enabling citizens to express their need for specific datasets or APPs, it also allows them to rate the quality of datasets, seek clarification or information from respective data controller.

In addition, to support wider reach and dissemination of datasets, anyone can share the information about any dataset published on the portal with his/her social media pages on a press of a click.

Several innovative and useful apps across platforms and devices ranging from Mobile/Tablet, SMS to Voice-based applications using Open Government Data have been created which help the government serve its citizens better. Therefore, we see the advent of innovation building in India using government data through various types of APPs, mash-ups, info-graphics, visualizations and even services.

### Additional Information

- <https://data.gov.in/sites/default/files/brochure.pdf>
- [http://www.opendataresearch.org/sites/default/files/publications/sumandro\\_oddc\\_project\\_report\\_0.pdf](http://www.opendataresearch.org/sites/default/files/publications/sumandro_oddc_project_report_0.pdf)
- [http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/stats/documents/ece/ces/ge.50/2014/Topic\\_3\\_India.pdf](http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/stats/documents/ece/ces/ge.50/2014/Topic_3_India.pdf)
- <https://data.gov.in>

### Questions for Discussion

1. Do you believe proactive information and data disclosure mechanisms are a good direction for the government to be taking?
2. What information would you access from such a platform?
3. Do you think this platform has a positive impact on transparency and accountability of government bodies?