A Case Study of ICT Solutions against ICT Abuse: An RTI Act 2005 Success Story

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Abstract

The field of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) has developed by leaps and bounds in the recent times. A goal of ICT is to facilitate information transparency. However, information transparency is more challenged than achieved. Information authorities do not disclose information that easily. As a result, the realization of knowledge society has rather become a mirage. Appearances are that ICT has percolated into the hoi polloi. Knowledge is power. But, information is the key resource for knowledge. The public authorities tended to keep the information more hidden from than revealed to the common masses. This resulted in the advent of RTI Act 2005. However, the public authorities tend to give misleading information and cases of remedial action against the public authorities are raising.

In this paper, we present a case of three decisions of the RTI authority against the institutional authorities, particularly the public information officer, for abusing the RTI act and public authority. We present how we adopted the technological means of website for the generation of awareness w.r.t. a cybercriminal organization in Telangana which perpetrated the crimes of sedition, violation of State

Emblem of India (Prevention of Improper Use) Act 2005 and cheating. By means of the website support, we generated national consciousness and national spirit among the student community. It is our conviction that the generation of such positive national feelings go a long way in national development and towards putting the academics at the university level on the right front.

1.Introduction

A cybercriminal organization was prevalent in JNTUH in the last several years. It maintained a website which is the base for its cybercrimes. The website was used to organize quite many a section of the university population in JNTUH. Nearly 2000 people got registered in the website. The website indicates this. The details are in [1, 6, 9, 10, 11, 12].

The university served as a strong base for the cybercriminal organization. The organization installed flexi banners at different spots of the university campus such a location opposite to the university canteen, university constituent engineering college entrance gate and the university entrance gate. The seven photo images in the Figure 1 indicate that the organization made wide publicity of itself in the university environment particularly in these spots. The last, big photo image indicates the invitation of the organization to the first year students of B.Tech. course who came to report for the class work after Engineering Counselling process. The invitation banner mentions the website and the contact mobile nos. of the organization.

In other words, the organization indicated by jntuhjac.com perpetrated cybercrimes online and put itself up as an innocent organization offline in the flexi banner fixed to the university gate. The flexi banner is a natural attraction to the novice students to register in the cybercriminal organizational website thus tending to fall prey to the stratagem. Thus was created a lopsided academic environment in the university.

The rest of the paper is organized as follows. Section 2 presents the scenario wherein the RTI Act solutions were explored to check the cybercriminal organization in the university academic environment. In section 3, the webpage and website approaches for devising the technological solutions are presented as the central theme of the work. Section 4 concludes the paper.

2.The Aftermath

To arrest the campaign of the cybercriminal organization, information was sought from the Public Information Officer, JNTUH w.r.t. the digital images of the flexi banners. The relevant PIO is the Registrar, JNTUH. The PIO failed to furnish the information. Representation was submitted to the first appellate authority of the JNTUH, but in vain. Then, appeal was submitted to the State Information Commission. The information commission called the RTI applicant and the public authority in JNTUH.

Realizing from the interactions that the PIO, JNTUH gave misleading/misguiding information, the State Information Commission gave its judgement/decision notice. The copies of the decision notice are in Figures 2 & 3.

3.Central Theme

Now, it fell upon us to campaign for the elimination of the cybercrimes in the university environment. Basically, awareness generation, with regard to how Internet is used for migration of crimes, was the task ahead. The students obtained knowledge in the primary school education environment and the secondary school education environment. But, in the university level, the knowledge is gone or became lopsided or is abused. This is the pity of the situation. This was to be undone.

We devised a website approach for awareness generation among the student community. The webpage in [15] was devised for the campaign purpose. The students came to know, were surprised how they were trapped in the shackles of ignorance and were responsive for a change of environment. The appreciated the ICT approach for handling ICT crimes.

4.Conclusions

'ICT approach for handling ICT crimes' is a good motto. ICT has become a necessary evil in the modern age. The evils of the ICT and the necessary solutions to the demerits of ICT usage and abuse are to be handled again by ICT. This was our approach. We also used social networks for the ICT solutions for the considered ICT abuse problem. The guidance and counseling webpage has drawn considerable response and the students formed groups of themselves as social networks and the cybercriminal organization is brought to book. An FIR was filed, charge sheet was filed. Thus, cybercriminal activity became checked by our endeavors.

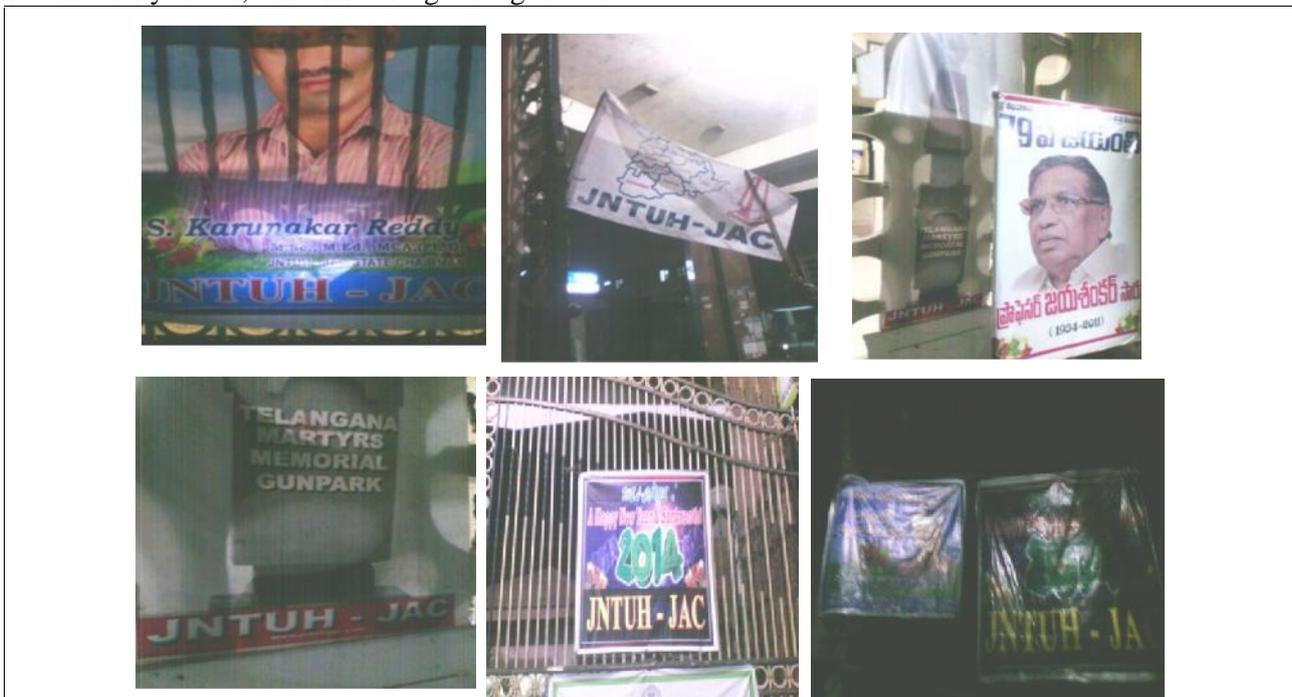**Figure 1:** 7 Photocopies of the Banners of the Cybercriminal Organization in 3 locations in the JNTUH Campus: @JNTUHC College of Engg. Main Gate, @JNTUH Main Gate, and @Location Opp. to JNTUH Canteen. Notice the Last Photo containing the Details of the Website and the Contact Nos. of the Cybercriminal Organization
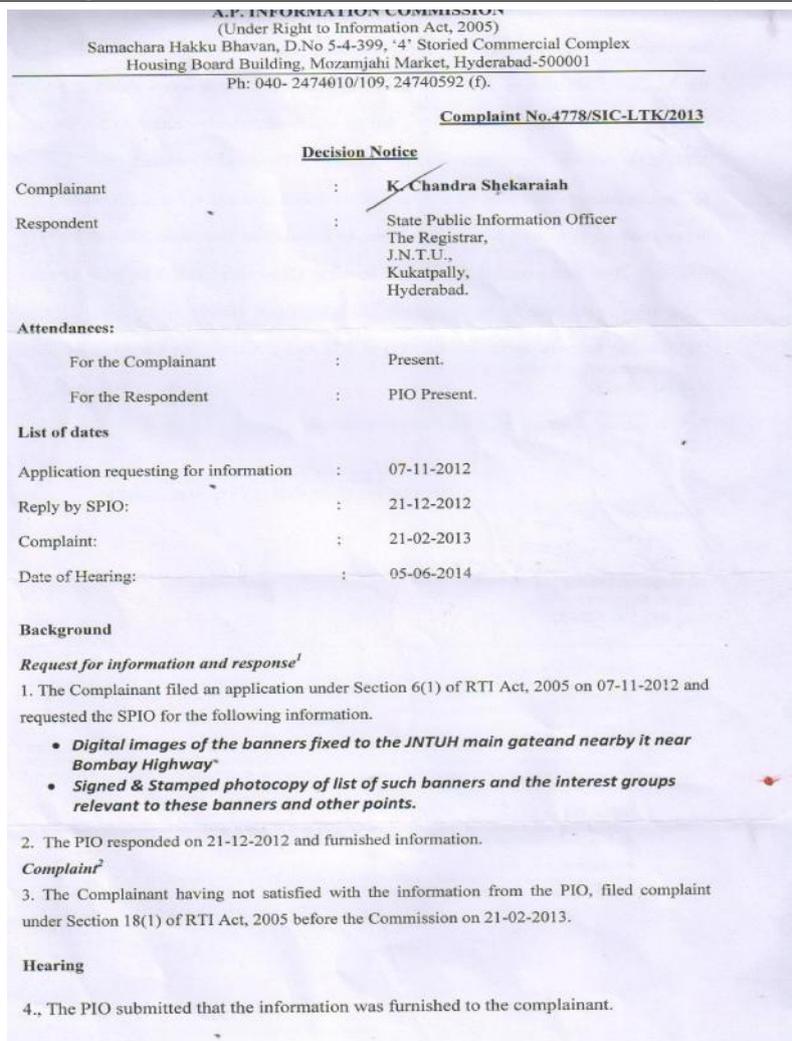

Figure 2: Copy of the Page 1 of the A.P. State Information Commissioner Decision Notice
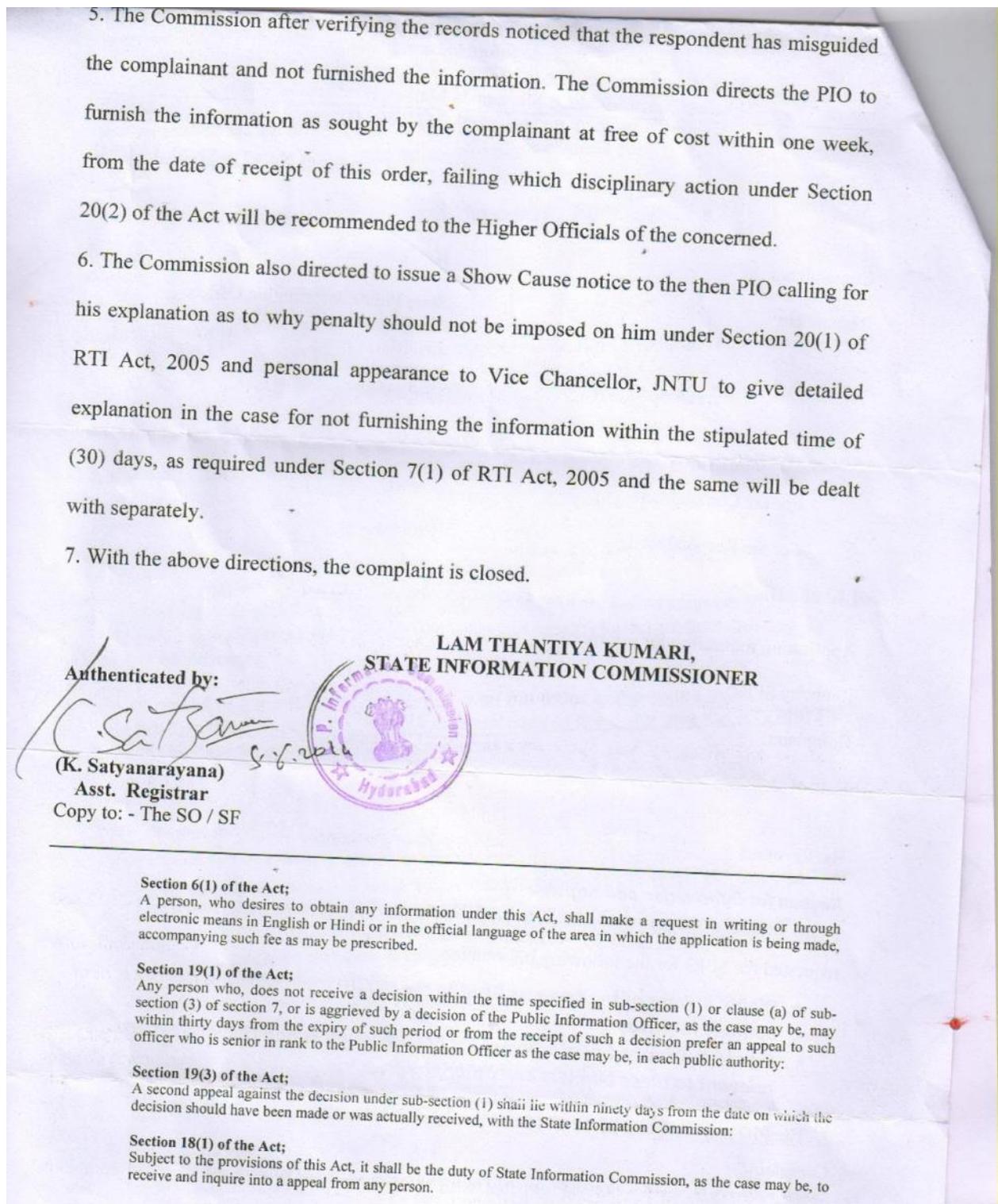
5. The Commission after verifying the records noticed that the respondent has misguided the complainant and not furnished the information. The Commission directs the PIO to furnish the information as sought by the complainant at free of cost within one week, from the date of receipt of this order, failing which disciplinary action under Section 20(2) of the Act will be recommended to the Higher Officials of the concerned.

6. The Commission also directed to issue a Show Cause notice to the then PIO calling for his explanation as to why penalty should not be imposed on him under Section 20(1) of RTI Act, 2005 and personal appearance to Vice Chancellor, JNTU to give detailed explanation in the case for not furnishing the information within the stipulated time of (30) days, as required under Section 7(1) of RTI Act, 2005 and the same will be dealt with separately.

7. With the above directions, the complaint is closed.

LAM THANTIYA KUMARI,
STATE INFORMATION COMMISSIONER

Authenticated by:

(K. Satyanarayana)
Asst. Registrar
Copy to: - The SO / SF

Section 6(1) of the Act;
A person, who desires to obtain any information under this Act, shall make a request in writing or through electronic means in English or Hindi or in the official language of the area in which the application is being made, accompanying such fee as may be prescribed.

Section 19(1) of the Act;
Any person who, does not receive a decision within the time specified in sub-section (1) or clause (a) of sub-section (3) of section 7, or is aggrieved by a decision of the Public Information Officer, as the case may be, may within thirty days from the expiry of such period or from the receipt of such a decision prefer an appeal to such officer who is senior in rank to the Public Information Officer as the case may be, in each public authority:

Section 19(3) of the Act;
A second appeal against the decision under sub-section (1) shall lie within ninety days from the date on which the decision should have been made or was actually received, with the State Information Commission:

Section 18(1) of the Act;
Subject to the provisions of this Act, it shall be the duty of State Information Commission, as the case may be, to receive and inquire into a appeal from any person.

Figure 3: Copy of the Page 2 of the A.P. State Information Commissioner Decision Notice

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