

**CENTRAL INFORMATION COMMISSION**

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**F.No.CIC/AT/C/2007/00282**  
**Dated, the 15<sup>th</sup> October, 2007.**

**Complainant : Shri S.P. Goyal, H.No.103A, Krishna Chambers, 59 New Marine Lines, Mumbai-400 020.**

**Respondents : Shri V.K. Singal, Commissioner of Income Tax-XII & CPIO, Office of the Commissioner of Income Tax-XII, 265 Aayakar Bhavan, Maharashi Karve Marg, Mumbai-400 020.**

This is a complaint filed by Shri S.P. Goyal (complainant) against the CPIO, Shri V.K. Singal, Commissioner of Income Tax-XII, Mumbai.

2. The short-point in this case is whether the fee and the cost charged to the complainant for transmission of the information requested by him through his RTI-application dated 1.5.2007 was in order.

3. Parties were called for a hearing on 10.10.2007. The complainant was present in person, while the respondents were represented by the CPIO.

4. The CPIO pointed out that the complainant, Shri S.P. Goyal has been filing a large number of RTI-applications for information, documents and so on. Initially, the public authority had patiently provided to him the necessary information, but later they were extremely handicapped by the proclivity of the complainant to file multiple applications, very often in the same matter with more than one public authority and seek voluminous information including certified copies of letters he has been writing to the public authority in the past several years. CPIO pointed out that the public authority had to suspend its other regular work in order to attend to the RTI-requirements of this complainant. Since this is imposing cost on the public authority, it was decided to invoke the provisions of Section 7(3) of the RTI Act to charge to the complainant not only the fee as prescribed in the Rules for each page of the information provided, but also the cost for the effort expended on collecting, collating and transmitting the requisitioned information.

5. In the present case, the following cost and fee has been worked out:-

1)	Xerox copies (as prescribed)	Rs.2.00
2)	Pay of Officer & Inspector to read & verify the matter to be given about Rs.50,000 / 22 working day / 8 hours / 60 Mins X 10M approximate time consumed for one page =	
	50,000/22 day	= Rs.2,272 per day
	2,272/8 Hrs.	= Rs.284 per Hour
	282/60 Mins.	= Rs.4.73 per minute
	Rs.4.73 X 10 minutes =	Rs.47.34

3)	Electric & Miscellaneous expenses (approx)	Rs. 0.66
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	Total cost per page	Rs.50.00
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	Your requirement of 668 pages cost = 668 X Rs.50	=Rs.33,400
	Less : copying charges already paid	=Rs. 500
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	<b>Balance</b>	<b>Rs.32,900</b>
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6. The respondents have submitted that this is quite reasonable considering not only the fact that the documents sought comprised a voluminous 668 pages, but also the fact that the complainant seeks similar information through repeated applications forcing the public authority to remain continuously engaged in collecting and collating the information to be provided to him.

7. Section 7(3) of the RTI Act enjoins a public authority to charge an information-seeker both,

- (a) the fee, which is Rs.2/- per page, and
- (b) 'further fee' towards the cost of providing the information.

8. While 'a' has been pre-determined and the complainant is being charged the same, 'b' is to be decided by the public authority. I find that the public authority has taken its decision, which the complainant was not able to impeach on any ground. The specific plea of the respondents for charging this cost to the complainant is that what the complainant has requested is certified copies of documents which run into hundreds of pages. A responsible officer has to carefully tally, compare the documents with the originals and certify these only thereafter, and certify, lest he errs into providing wrong certification. The certifying officer has to suspend his other work to attend to this RTI-request of the complainant, and hence a charge of Rs.50/- per page as cost for certifying the hundreds of pages of information which the appellant has asked for is not unreasonable.

9. The Commission finds merit in the respondents' submission. The amount demanded from the complainant by the CPIO is reasonable considering the appellant's sizeable requirement of certified copies.

10. The decision of the CPIO is upheld. The complaint is, therefore, rejected

Sd/-  
(A.N. TIWARI)  
INFORMATION COMMISSIONER

Authenticated by –

Sd/-  
( D.C. SINGH )  
Under Secretary & Asst. Registrar

Address of parties:

1. Shri S.P. Goyal, H.No.103A, Krishna Chambers, 59 New Marine Lines, Mumbai-400 020.
2. Shri V.K. Singal, Commissioner of Income Tax-XII & CPIO, Office of the Commissioner of Income Tax-XII, 265 Aayakar Bhavan, Maharashi Karve Marg, Mumbai-400 020.