

Fake certificate racket busted in Chennai

DC CORRESPONDENT

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All it cost the 'buyer' was Rs 20,000 for class 12 to Rs 50,000 for graduation certificate



Central Crime Branch (CCB) officials inspecting the certificates and rubber stamps seized from the accused, at the police commissionerate on Thursday. (Photo: DC)

Chennai: An employee of education department and his son were arrested by the central crime branch (CCB) officials on Thursday for running a bogus certificate racket in the city for the past two years. The racket came to light after the police apprehended two brokers with certificates of premier

colleges. The mastermind behind the fraud, M. Gowthaman, 57, employed with Lady Willingdon B.Ed College in Chennai, and his son, G. Lokesh, 32, were picked up from their hideout at Vyasarpadi, where marksheets from any university in the state could be faked, said a CCB official. The accused were remanded in judicial custody.

“All it cost the ‘buyer’ was Rs 20,000 for a class 12 marksheet to about Rs 50,000 for a graduation certificate from a premier government institution, like Anna University, all resembling the original,” a police official said. According to the official, the buyers were usually students who under performed in academics, and the onus lay on the institutions to have foolproof systems in place.

Around 250 rubber stamps, 20,000 hologram stickers of premier universities like University of Madras, Anna University, electronic items used for making the certificates and another 100 fake certificates were picked up from the house. The police said Gowthaman started his career as an office assistant with the directorate of school education office at Nungambakkam in 1990 and had joined Lady Willingdon College in 1997.

In 2000, he was arrested by the city police for indulging in a similar offence for which he was temporarily suspended. However, the suspension was revoked in 2002 and Gowthaman had managed to stay off his illegal acts for about a decade. In 2012, he resumed his fraudulent activities on a big scale, now putting his son, Lokesh's knowledge of computer applications to use.

Lokesh, a class 10 dropout, runs a computer service centre in Vyasarpadi. “He took care of the computer work while his father provided all the raw materials, like rubber stamps and hologram stickers,” a senior CCB official said. Gowthaman told the police that he had gone into this business as he had two wives and five children to support.

Source: <https://www.deccanchronicle.com/140919/nation-crime/article/fake-certificate-racket-busted-chennai>