

BEFORE THE CONSUMER GRIEVANCES REDRESSAL FORUM
(Under the Electricity Act, 2003)
PUDUCHERRY

PRESENT:

THIRU T. GOPALAKRISHNAN, B.E.,
CHAIRMAN

THIRU A.S. JITENDRA RAO, B. Tech., M.B.A.,
LICENSEE MEMBER

THIRU R. KRISHNAMURTHY, B.Com., LLB., PGDFL.,
JERC NOMINATED MEMBER

WEDNESDAY THE 13th DAY OF SEPTEMBER 2023

CONSUMER CASE No. 117/2023

P.A. Chitra,
W/o V.R. Balasoupramanian,
No.24, Hospital Street,
TVK Nagar, Mudaliarpeta,
Puducherry-605004.

....

Complainant

Vs.

- 1) The Executive Engineer- Urban,
Electricity Department,
Puducherry.
- 2) The Assistant Engineer –Marapalam
Electricity Department,
Puducherry.
- 3) The Junior Accounts Officer – Rev.I,
Electricity Department,
Puducherry.
- 4) The Junior Engineer –Mudaliarpeta,
Electricity Department,
Puducherry.

....

Respondents

This case in C.C. No.117/2023 came up before this Forum for final hearing on 23/08/2023. After hearing both sides having stood over till this date for consideration this Forum has delivered the following:

The case of the complainant is as follows.

A Complaint was received from P.A. Chitra on 28/07/2023. In the complaint the Complainant stated that She had obtained a service connection in Policy code No.09-52-03-0439CA/A2 in the year 2013 and from the date of service she has paid the bill without any default. In the month of February 2020 the electricity bill was Rs.771/-. During COVID-19 pandemic period she did not notice the electricity bill. In August 2020 the electricity bill was Rs.17,739/- and during and paid part amount of Rs.7,500/- on 30/09/2020. Six months electricity consumption jumped to Rs.17,000/- which shows that there is a defect in Meter. On 20/02/2023 she paid a part payment of Rs.30,000/-. There is abnormal claim due to defect in the meter. In March 2023 the electricity bill is Rs.80,030/- and BPSC charges in all the bills are abnormal. The meter fixed by the Department was out of her own fund and so meter rent should not be collected from her. But the Department has collected ever since from the date of service connection. On 20/02/2023 he has made a complaint to the Department to check the correctness of the meter and if found defective, she has prayed to change the meter, to reduce the BPSC charges and adjust the meter rent for the arrears bill amount. After receipt of her complaint, no action was taken by the Department. Therefore the Complainant prayed to check the correctness of the meter and to reduce the BPSC and to adjust the collected meter rent for the arrears . Hence the complaint.

2. The complaint has been registered as C.C. No.117/2023 on 28/07/2023 and copy of the complaint was sent to the Executive Engineer –Urban and others for giving reply by 08/08/2023. Reply from the Respondents was received on 11/08/2023. The case was posted for hearing on 18/08/2023; but was postponed to 23/08/2023 on the oral request of the Complainant.

3. In the Affidavit dated 11/08/2023, the Assistant Engineer -Marapalam/ Respondent No.2 for himself and on behalf of Respondent No.1 and 4 has stated that, the domestic service bearing policy code 09-52-03-0439CA/A2 is standing in the name of the Complainant. Based on the letter from the consumer the service was inspected and the performance of the existing 3 nos. of 1 θ -digital meter were checked and found in good condition. The consumption data for the period from February 2020 to July 2023 is enumerated along with the details of payment made. It may be seen from the statement that the consumer was irregular in payment which was the main reason for the accumulation of the arrears. In order to verify the performance of meter correctly a check meter has been provided on 08/08/2023 and propose to take reading at end of the week to ascertain the consumption pattern and check with check out reading comparison and based on which recommendation will be made for bill correction. This Department was not aware of the meter was purchased by the consumer. However, the meter rent has been re-revised by removing the meter rent collected from the consumer for the collected period, if necessary document towards purchase of meter has been produced. Further, if necessary, the main meter will be sent to lab for checking the performance of meter, if the consumption pattern differs and report will be submitted later. Based on the letter from Complainant on 20/02/2023, the premises was inspected several times to check the performance of the meter. But it was in door-locked condition. Hence the performance of the meter could not be checked.

4. In the Affidavit dated 04/08/2023 the Junior Accounts Officer-Rev.I / Respondent No.3 has stated that on scrutinizing of the available, it is noticed that, the current consumption bill pertaining to the said policy has been issued regularly, based on the readings recorded by the Meter Readers. The three meters in the said service connection are separately recording energy as per the reading furnished by the Meter Reader. Bill would be revised if required after receipt of field report.

5. Hearing was held on 23/08/2023. Both the Complainant and Respondents were present. The Complainant reiterated that the reading was taken regularly after COVID and the meter belongs to the Complainant and hence the meter rent to be refunded. The Respondent No.2 informed that as per the records of the Department, the meter belongs to the Complainant and the Respondent No.3 will be advised orally to revise the bill. Further the Respondent No. 2 has been directed to test the released meter in the lab and file additional Affidavit with the lab report. The Respondent No.2 has been directed to revise the bill deleting meter rent and BPSC charges. The Respondent No.3 has filed additional Affidavit on 25/08/2023 with the revised statement of arrears of Rs.83,144/- with BPSC.

Observation: The Respondents are directed to test the meter in the presence of the Complainant and furnish the test report. It is understood that the Meter Testing was getting delayed as the Accuecheck meter calibration of the Department is getting delayed due to some issues in testing lab at Chennai.

ORDER

- i. The Respondents are directed to obtain the Lab Test Report and furnish a copy to this Forum for records. If bill revision is required based on the outcome of the Lab Report, a revised bill statement of arrears shall be communicated to the Complainant without BPSC after deleting the meter rent. A copy of the bill should be sent to this Forum for records.
- ii. The Complaint is allowed to the extent indicated.
- iii. The Complainant, if aggrieved, by non-redressal of his / her grievance by the Forum or non-implementation of CGRF Order by the Licensee, may make an Appeal in prescribed Annexure-IV to the Electricity Ombudsman, Joint Electricity Regulatory Commission for the state of Goa and Union Territories, 3rd Floor, Plot No. 55-56, Pathkind Lab Building, Service Road, Udyog Vihar, Phase IV, Sector -18 Gurugram, Haryana-122015; Phone 0124-4684708;

email within 30 days from the date of this Order under intimation to this Forum and the Respondents.

iv. Non-compliance with the directions of Forum by the Licensee shall attract remedial action under Sections 142 and 146, of the Electricity Act 2003.

Dated at Puducherry on this the 13th day of September, 2023

Sd/-
(R. KRISHNAMURTHY)
JERC NOMINATED MEMBER

Sd/-
(A.S. JITENDRA RAO)
LICENSEE MEMBER

Sd/-
(T. GOPALAKRISHNAN)
CHAIRMAN

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