

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

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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

FRIDAY, THE 15<sup>TH</sup> DAY OF SEPTEMBER 2023

**CONSUMER CASE No. 119/2023**

P. Padmavathi, W/o  
S. Punitharaj,  
No.31, First Cross Street,  
Sri Lakshmi Narasimma Nagar,  
Iyyankuttipalayam,  
Puducherry- 605009.

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Complainant

Vs.

- 1) The Executive Engineer-Rural(North),  
Electricity Department,  
Puducherry.
- 2) The Assistant Engineer –Kurumbapet,  
Electricity Department,  
Puducherry.
- 3) The Junior Accounts Officer-Rev.II,  
Electricity Department,  
Puducherry.
- 4) The Junior Engineer- Muthirapalayam,  
Electricity Department,  
Puducherry.

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Respondents

This case in C.C. No.119/2023 came up before this Forum for final hearing on 29/08/2023. After hearing both sides and 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. Padmavathi W/o S. Punitharaj on 31/07/2023. In the complaint, the Complainant had stated that she is residing in the above mentioned address, having a three phase service connection bearing policy code No.26-16-06-0627H. Due to COVID-19 current consumption bill was not issued regularly and average consumption was charged and a part of the bill amount was paid by her in August 2020. She has paid current consumption bill based on average consumption through online. On 17/04/2023 she had given a letter to the Junior Engineer, Kurumbapet for replacement of meter. Suddenly one staff from the Department has taken reading and hand over a bill for Rs.59,373/-. In this regard she had approached the Junior Engineer and also given a letter to the Assistant Engineer, Kurumbapet on 02/06/2023; but no action was taken. Again for the month of June 2023, a bill for Rs.65,026 was received. On 22/06/2023 she has purchased a meter in a private firm and handed over to the Department for testing. On 03/07/2023 the Department staff have come for disconnection for which she has paid an amount of 13,500/- . Then only the new meter was fixed in her house. Now reading has been taken and bill for Rs.60,440/- including old dues was given. She has stated that from May 2020 current consumption charges are paid by her regularly without any default for Rs.63,113/- Therefore, the Complainant prayed this Forum to issue necessary directions to the Respondents to revise the bill. Hence the complaint.

2. The complaint has been registered as C.C. No.119/2023 on 31/07/2023 and copy of the complaint was sent to the Executive Engineer –Rural (North) and others for giving reply by 11/08/2023. Reply from the Respondents was received on 14/08/2023 and a copy of the same was communicated to the Complainant. The case was posted for hearing on 25/08/2023.

3. In the Affidavit dated 14/08/2023, the Assistant Engineer, Kurumbapet/ Respondent No.2 for himself and on behalf of Respondent No.1 and 4 has stated that based on the consumer request for replacement of meter an MFR was executed on 11/07/2023 with the reason for removal is “consumer complaint for the meter malfunctioning & replace the meter requested”. The released meter is sent to the Department Lab for testing and received lab test report indicated that the performance of the energy meter was found normal and errors are within the permissible limits. The Respondent No. enclosed the test report and details of the service connection and previous six months reading from 01/03/2023 to 01/08/2023. From the month of April 2022 KW based Fixed SC @ Rs.30/- for domestic service connection. Hence additional fixed SC amount has to be paid from April 2023. The dues are pending since April 2023. It is the responsibility of the policy holder to pay the electricity bill every month and in case of bill dispute a part of the disputed amount to be made. Necessary enforcement has been conducted recently to collect the dues from the LT / HT consumers and the Complainant is taking advantage of leniency showed to policy holder in respect of payment dues and blanketly trying to evade payment of dues and she wants to extend power supply without remitting the dues.

4. In the Affidavit dated 17/08/2023 the Junior Accounts Officer Rev-II / Respondent No.3 had stated that no field report for current consumption bill revision has been received by the Revenue –II Section from the concerned O&M. The bill statement in respect of the said electrical service for the period from April 2019 to May 2023 is submitted. As per the statement, the consumer is due to pay a total amount of Rs.63,679/- towards arrears of current consumption charges.

5. Hearing was held on 25/08/2023. The Complainant was represented by her husband and the Respondents were present. During the hearing the Complainant had informed that bills are not issued regularly. Due to COVID and

Department staff strike, bills are not issued. All of a sudden reading taken in March 2023 and arrears bills issued. Complaint given in April 2023 to check the performance of the meter and Respondents submitted that since there is no rolling stock or new meter is available in the Department the Complainant has purchased the new meter on her own will and requested the Department to replace the meter. After testing in the lab the disputed meter is found to be in good working condition. The Forum had asked the Respondent No.2 how the Complainant was asked to buy a new meter for replacement, even before testing the released meter. The Respondent No.3 was directed to file additional Affidavit along with the working sheet for the amount payable by the Complainant. The case was adjourned to 29/08/2023.

6. In the Affidavit dated 04/09/2023 the Junior Accounts Officer-Rev.II / Respondent No.3 has stated that the revision-I in respect of the said service is proposed for the period from the month of effect of the service i.e., December 2018 to June 2023 without levying BPSC. In the earlier bill Fixed service charge were not added since April 2021 as per JERC Tariff Order and now included proportionate to the connected load levied from April 2021. As per the proposed current consumption bill revision-I the consumer is due to pay Rs.54,185/- towards arrears of current consumption charges. The Revision-II in respect of the service from April 2021 to June 2023 without levying BPSC and Fixed Surcharge proportionate to the connected load levied from April 2021. As per Revision-II the consumer has to pay Rs.56,613/- towards arrears of current consumption charges.

7. During the hearing held on 29/08/2023, both the Complainant and the Respondents were present. The Respondent No.3 has filed additional Affidavit along with working sheet as directed. As per the calculation, the Complainant has

to pay a sum of Rs.56,613/-. The Complainant has prayed this Forum to permit to pay the arrears in six instalments.

Observation: It is inferred that the Meter Reader had issued manipulated consumption bill. When new Meter Reader was entrusted with this work, correct readings was posted and the higher bill amount was claimed. When the Complainant approached the Department, the disputed meter could not be released from service and sent for testing at lab. The Complainant offered to provide new meter from outside agency. Later the disputed meter was found normal. The Complainant was put with unnecessary hardships for the fault of the Meter Reader eventhough she remitted the amount regularly. To mitigate the hardship the total consumption was spread over to the earlier tenure without levying BPSC. The Department is advised to avoid such lapses in the future. The Complainant came forward to bear the justified amount based on the actual consumption but only pleaded six instalments which was considered.

#### ORDER

- i. As discussed above, the Respondents are directed to issue revised bill statement to the Complainant within 15 days from the date of this Order by allowing 6 instalments to pay the arrears.
- ii. The Complainant is directed to pay the arrears as per the revised bill statement in 6 instalments on the dates mentioned by the Department in the order along with the regular monthly current consumption bill.
- iii. Thus, the complaint is allowed.
- iv. 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  
[ombudsman.jercuts@gov.in](mailto:ombudsman.jercuts@gov.in) within 30 days from the date of this Order under  
intimation to this Forum and the Respondents.

Dated at Puducherry on this the 15<sup>th</sup> day of September, 2023

**Sd/-**  
**(R. KRISHNAMURTHY)**  
**JERC NOMINATED MEMBER**

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

**Sd/-**  
**(T. GOPALAKRISHNAN)**  
**CHAIRMAN**