

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

THURSDAY, THE 3rd DAY OF NOVEMBER 2022

CONSUMER CASE No.167/2022

B. Murugan,
S/o R. Balakrishnan,
No.23, Dharmapuri Street,
Koodapakkam,
Puducherry.

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Complainant

Vs.

- 1) The Executive Engineer, Rural-North,
Electricity Department,
Puducherry
- 2) The Assistant Engineer –Sedharapet, O&M,
Electricity Department,
Puducherry.
- 3) The Junior Accounts Officer-Rev.II,
Electricity Department,
Puducherry.
- 4) The Junior Engineer-Ramanathapuram,
Electricity Department,
Puducherry.

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Respondents

This case in C.C. No.167/2022 came up before this Forum for final hearing on 21/10/2022. 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:

1. A Complaint was received through email from B. Murugan on 28/09/2022. In the complaint, the Complainant had stated that the meter seems to be defective and faulty and all of a sudden the meter jumped from January month meter reading of 13500 to 17000. Total units of that month itself 3500 units. The current consumption namely will be around 100-200 units in a month. He could not pay the bill as the meter is showing wrong value and wrong bill was generated. The Complainant prayed for correcting the meter and to generate correct bill. He has raised complaints through online, but could not get information from the site. Hence, the Complaint.
2. The complaint was registered as C.C. No.167/2022 on 29/09/2022 and copy of the complaint was forwarded to the Executive Engineer, Rural (North) and others to furnish reply by 10/10/2022. Reply received from the Respondents on 12/10/2022 and a copy of the same was communicated to the Complainant. The case was posted for hearing on 21/10/2022.
3. In the Affidavit dated 10/10/2022, the Assistant Engineer, Sedharapet/ Respondent No.2 for himself and on behalf of Respondent No.1 and 4 had stated that, the three phase domestic service in the name of Thiru R. Balakrishnan bearing policy No.37-69-02-0134/A2 has been inspected on 07/10/2022 and reported that the meter is in good working condition and the reading was 18539. Further it has been reported by the Junior Engineer, Ramanathapuram that the metering board is placed in inside of the of the safety gate of the house and the same is always in locked condition and the meter reader could not take monthly readings and hence issued the current consumption bills as 'DL' from June 2021 to January 2022. When issuing the January 2022 month bill to the consumer, the safety gate was in

opened and the meter reader recorded the readings as 17000 and arrived the consumption as 3500 units which is for the 'DL' period from June 2021 and 2022.

4. In the Affidavit dated 11/10/2022, the Junior Accounts Officer, Rev-II / Respondent No.3 had stated that, as per the relevant ledger records, the said existing domestic electrical service was under 'DL' status for a period of 8 months from June 2021 to January 2022 was 3500 units for which current consumption charges was calculated by the system based average units consumed for the said period. The inspection report of the Junior Engineer, Ramanathapuram, stated that the service connection was inspected and the meter is in good working condition and the reading taken on 07/10/2022 was 18539 units. Accordingly a statement of calculation of current consumption in respect of the above electrical service for the period from June 2021 to September 2022 is furnished. As per the calculation, the consumer is due to pay a total amount of Rs.17,483/- towards arrears of current consumption charges in respect of the said service upto the month of September 2022.

5. Hearing was held on 21/10/2022. The Complainant was represented by one Sathish on authorisation given by the Complainant and Respondents were present. During the hearing, the Complainant had informed that the meter is inside the grill and there is one old lady in the house and hence most of the time it will be in locked condition. Further the Complainant agreed when the Meter Reader takes reading in the house located in the backside, he can request to open the house and take reading. The Forum had informed the Complainant that the meter should be available outside in a safe location so that the Meter Reader can take reading without any hindrance. The Complainant was advised to arrange to shift the meter in the first instance in consultation with the Department to avoid recurrence of the same problem. As per the statement of the Respondent No.3 it is observed that the consumer has last paid an amount of Rs.9419/- in December 2021 and had not paid any amount after that. The Complainant informed that since the bill revision is

pending he did not pay any amount. The Forum asked the Complainant to pay an amount of Rs.10,000/- by the month end. The Respondents were asked why they have not issued any notice to the Complainant as per the provisions of Supply Code when they are not able to take reading continuously for more than 2 months. There is no response from the Respondent. The Respondents have also replied negatively when they have been asked whether the meter has been tested after objection raised by the Complainant. The Forum had directed the Respondents to arrange for testing the meter in the lab in the presence of the Complainant and to file additional Affidavit along with the lab report by 27/10/2022.

6. The Respondent No.2 had filed additional Affidavit, as directed, enclosing the test report from the lab. It is observed from the Test report that the meter testing was done in the absence of the Complainant. It is clear that Respondents overlooked the instructions of the Forum and carried out the testing on their own. As per the report, the performance of the meter is normal and within the permissible limits. As per the lab report the reading on 01/09/2022 is 18485 and as per the Affidavit of the Respondent No.2 the reading on 07/10/2022 was 18539 units which shows that there is continuity in the reading.

Observation: i. The average units worked out by the Respondent for 8 months based on the reading of June 2021 to January 2022 is 438 units per month, whereas, subsequent consumption is found to be around 200 units. The period when average was calculated is in partial lock-down condition due to pandemic and the consumption could have been more. Hence the present current consumption could not be compared with the consumption of the lock-down period.

ii. As per the additional Affidavit dated 26/10/2022 of the Respondent No.2 the arrears upto September 2022 is Rs.22,500/-. Based on the directions of the Forum it is understood that the Complainant had paid Rs.10,000/- on 28/10/2022. The bill needs to be revised taking into consideration of the amount paid by the Complainant.

ORDER

- i. Since the meter is in good working condition as per the lab report, the Complainant should pay the amount as claimed by the Department as per the consumption recorded in the meter.
- ii. The Respondents shall furnish a revised bill considering the amount paid by the Complainant within 7 days from the date of this Order. Any instalment, if required to pay the arrears, the Complainant may approach the Executive Engineer (O&M / Rural-North) to pay the arrears.
- iii. Thus, the complaint is not 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 within 30 days from the date of this Order under intimation to this Forum and the Respondents.

Dated at Puducherry on this the 3rd day of November, 2022

Sd/-

(R. KRISHNAMURTHY)
JERC NOMINATED MEMBER

Sd/-

(A.S. JITENDRA RAO)
LICENSEE MEMBER

Sd/-

(T. GOPALAKRISHNAN)
CHAIRMAN