

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 28TH DAY OF DECEMBER 2022

CONSUMER CASE No.181/2022

J. Narmadha Devi,
No.6, VVP Nagar,
K-Lane, Vazhudavur Road,
Puducherry-605009.

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Complainant

Vs.

- 1) The Executive Engineer,
Electricity Department,
Karaikal.
- 2) The Assistant Engineer –Town-I,
Electricity Department,
Karaikal.
- 3) The Junior Accounts Officer-Rev,
Electricity Department,
Karaikal.
- 4) The Junior Engineer-Town,
Electricity Department,
Karaikal.

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Respondents

This case in C.C. No.181/2022 came up before this Forum for final hearing on 15/12/2022. 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 from J. Narmada Devi, on 16/11/2022. In the complaint, the Complainant had stated that monthly bill would be around Rs.1500/- per month. But the bill for the month of March 2022 was issued for Rs. 4,389/- Since the amount is on higher side, she immediately approached the Assistant Engineer-Town-I, Karaikal and informed orally about the problem. The Assistant Engineer-Town-I directed her to give a complaint in writing and hence a complaint was given on 06/05/2022. But no action was taken by the Department and continued to receive bills for the month of April 2022 and May 2022 also. She had approached the Office of the Junior Engineer, Assistant Engineer and Executive Engineer, Karaikal several times; but no action was taken. During the routine visit, the Complainant was informed that the ACCUE check meter taken to Chennai for calibration and meter testing can be done only on receipt of calibrated meter back from Chennai. Finally, on 25/08/2022 meter was checked in the Department lab and was handed over the meter to get it fixed by the private contractor. Finally, a letter of the Assistant Engineer-Town-I has been received on 27/09/2022 informing that the meter is in good working condition and hence, the bill does not require any correction. The Complainant stated that the abnormal delay by the Department caused mental agony and request for compensation and also refund of excess amount made by the Complainant. Hence, the Complaint.

2. The complaint was registered as C.C. No.181/2022 on 16/11/2022 and copy of the complaint was sent to the Executive Engineer, Karaikal and others to furnish reply by 28/11/2022. Reply received from the Respondents on 05/12/2022 and a copy of the same was communicated to the Complainant. The case was posted for hearing on 15/12/2022.

3. In the Affidavit dated 25/11/2022, the Assistant Engineer, Town-I/ Respondent No.2 for himself and on behalf of Respondent No.1, 3 and 4 had stated that, based on the request of the Complainant on 06/05/2022 the meter was inspected and found that the meter is in good condition and the same was orally informed to the Petitioner. Again Petitioner submitted the complaint letter dated

30/05/2022 informing to check the meter and rectify the fault. During the said period, oral information was given to the Petitioner that the Accu-check meter was sent to Chennai for Calibration, after receiving Accu-check meter, the defective meter will be sent to lab for testing. Further, as per the request of the Petitioner the meter was sent to laboratory for testing on 25/08/2022 and tested in the presence of the Petitioner. Test report has been received on 26/08/2022 and found that the meter is in good condition. The fact was informed to the Petitioner on 23/09/2022. Hence, the bill revision does not arise.

4. Hearing was held on 15/12/2022. Both the Complainant and the Respondents were present. During the hearing the Complainant had again informed that the Department has not responded properly in time to hear the complaint. She wants to settle the bill before shifting her residence to Puducherry. After the meter tested in the lab, the Department asked orally to check the neutral connection inside the house as the meter is in good working condition. As suggested she had checked the wiring through private contractor and after that the consumption is going down. Had the Department checked the meter in May 2022 and given suggestion, the additional consumption in the month of April and May 2022 could have been avoided. The Respondent were asked why they have not taken action to attend to the metering complaint within time frame provided in Standards of Performance. The Respondents stated that the delay is due to non availability of Accu-check meter which is not accepted by this Forum. The Respondents could have brought the meter to Puducherry and got tested in the Department Lab.

5. The Forum had directed the Respondents to furnish the downloaded data of the meter within a week. The Assistant Engineer-Town-I filed additional Affidavit on 23/12/2022 with the downloaded data of the meter.

Observation: i. The details of consumption with initial and final reading taken from the bill served by the Department to the Complainant and the Consumption for the same months in the year 2021 are furnished by the Respondent during the hearing are shown below:

Month	Initial reading	Final reading	Consumption	In 2021
Jan 2022	8501	8821	320	298
Feb 2022	8821	9101	280	480
March 2022	9101	9981	880	565
April 2022	9981	10901	920	565
May 2022				
June 2022				
July 2022	10901	12641	1740	600
August 2022	12641	12821	180	590

The statement of downloaded data along with the reading taken by the Meter reader furnished by the Assistant Engineer, Town-I in his additional Affidavit dated 23/12/2022 are furnished below:

Date	Downloaded reading	Reading taken by MR
01/08/2022	12136	12641
01/09/2022	12633	12821
01/10/2022	12913	12913

From the bill details mentioned above it is observed that the consumption of 1740 units recorded for July 2022 is the total consumption for the period from May 2022 to July 2022 it is not clear whether the bill is issued based on 3 months average for May 2022 and June 2022, needs to be clarified by the Respondents.

ii. From the meter downloaded data and the reading taken by the Department it is observed that the reading downloaded on 01/08/2022 is 12136 whereas the reading entered by the Meter reader is 12641 which is 500 units more than the reading recorded in the meter. Similarly, for September 2022, the reading as per the downloaded data is 12633; whereas the reading entered by the Meter reader is 12821. The reading on 01/10/2022 downloaded is 12913 whereas the reading entered by the Meter reader is 12931 which are almost same.

iii. The average consumption as per the downloaded data for the months of August to October 2022 is 476 units per month. Whereas the average consumption based on the reading taken from January 2022 to August 2022 is 540 units. From the reading given in the bill it is observed that the consumption for January, February and August are much below the average consumption. Since the reading of the downloaded data and the reading taken by the Meter reader are almost same, on 01.10.2022, it is presumed that the Meter reader had entered erroneous reading on his own without actually checking the meter reading resulting in lower consumption in some months and higher consumption in some other months.

ORDER

- i. As pointed out in the observation above, the Department should clearly indicate whether the consumption of 1740 has been divided equally for 3 months and issue revised monthly bill statement from January 2022 to August 2022, considering the payment made already by the Complainant. The Respondents are directed to see whether any excess payment made by the Complainant.
- ii. The revised working sheet should be furnished to the Complainant within 15 days from the date of the Order with a copy marked to this Forum. If any excess payment was made, the same should be adjusted in the future bills. Since, the meter is in good working condition, revision of bill does not arise.
- iii. Thus the Complaint is allowed to the extent indicated.
- 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.
- v. 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 28th day of December, 2022

Sd/-
(R. KRISHNAMURTHY)
JERC NOMINATED MEMBER

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

Sd/-
(T. GOPALAKRISHNAN)
CHAIRMAN