

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

PRESENT:

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

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

WEDNESDAY, THE 10th DAY OF JUNE, 2020

CONSUMER CASE No.21/2020

G. Lourdu Marie,
No.6, Second Cross,
Amma Nagar,
Gopalan Kadai,
Villianur,
Puducherry - 10

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Complainant

Vs.

- 1) The Executive Engineer- Rural (North), O & M,
Electricity Department,
Puducherry.
- 2) The Assistant Engineer – Boomianpet,
Electricity Department,
Puducherry.
- 3) The Junior Accounts Office – Revenue - II
Electricity Department,
Puducherry.
- 4) The Junior Engineer, Villianur,
Electricity Department,
Puducherry.

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Respondents

This case in C.C. No.21/2020 came up before this Forum for hearing on 03.06.2020. 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. Tmt. G. Lourdu Marie has filed a complaint before this Forum on 09/03/2020, complaining that she was residing in the above mentioned address for the past 20 years and had availed OHOB services for the past 10 years. Since the consumption is more, a separate meter service was availed in the month of August 2017 with Policy No.32-91-03-0195. Monthly consumption for the said policy was not received in time inspite of repeated visit to the Department. Finally the bill was issued in January 2020 claiming an amount of Rs.53,865/- by mentioning in the bill as 'Door Locked'. It is the lapse on the part of the Electricity Department to serve current consumption bill in time. Because of her financial condition she has informed that she is not in a position to pay the entire amount and has prayed for revision of the bill. Hence the complaint.
2. The complaint has been registered as C.C. No.21/2020 and notices have been sent to the Respondents 09/03/2020 to reply on or before 19/03/2020. On receipt of the reply on 18/03/2020 and 19/03/2020 received from the Respondents, initially the case has been posted for hearing on 31/03/2020. But, hearing could not be conducted due to 'COVID 19 Lock Down' condition imposed by the Government.
3. The Respondents in their reply has stated that they have located the application of the Complainant during the physical verification of the Office of the Junior Engineer (O & M) and after taking reading intimation was sent to the Junior Accounts Officer Revenue – II in January 2020 for issue of regular bills. Accordingly, the Junior Accounts Officer Revenue – II issued bill on 24/02/2020 for an amount of Rs. 53,865/-. The Junior Accounts Officer Revenue – II in the Affidavit had mentioned that based on the intimation received from the Assistant Engineer, Boomianpet, on 20/01/2020, the bill was generated and issued on 24/02/2020 and also submitted a statement with month-wise calculation of arrears from September 2017 to January 2020 for a total amount of Rs.51,780/-

4. During the hearing the Complainant had stated that due to her financial problem she is not in a position to pay the amount in full. However, she had requested for 25 monthly instalments to clear the arrears.

Observation:

- (i) It is observed from the statement of the Junior Accounts Officer Revenue – II that they have calculated the current consumption charges alone and not levied any BPSC since the bill was not served in time.
- (ii) During the hearing the Junior Engineer, Villianur O&M has been instructed to check the present reading as on date. As per the report furnished to the Forum on 03/06/2020, the present reading is 17349. The consumption for the period from January 2020 to the present reading is 1988 units and the average for the period of 4 months works out to about 495 units which is almost same as the average worked out as per the Junior Accounts Officer Revenue – II in the monthly statement. Hence, there is no discrepancy in the consumption recorded.
- (iii) In a similar case from the same O & M, this Forum had issued orders for taking action on the erring official and the action initiated is not known to this Forum.
- (iv) The Department should evolve a mechanism to solve this type of complaint so that the grievances of the consumers could be addressed in a uniform pattern.

ORDER

- i. The request of the Complainant to allow 25 instalments may not be possible and this Forum decides that 15 instalments be allowed to pay the arrears along with the current consumption charges for the month of February 2020, March 2020 and April 2020.
- ii. The Junior Accounts Officer Revenue-II shall issue Instalment order for the arrears and current consumption charges upto April within 5 working days from the date of receipt of this Order indicating the due date for each monthly instalment.

- iii. The Complainant is directed to pay the monthly instalments along with regular current consumption charges bill of the particular month, failing which the Department will be free to levy BPSC on the default amount and take action as per rules for non payment of current consumption charges.
- iv. Thus the Complaint is allowed to the extent indicated.
- v. The Complainant is at liberty to prefer an appeal against this Order before the Ombudsman, Joint Electricity Regulatory Commission for the state of Goa and Union Territories, 3rd and 4th Floor, Plot No. 55-56, Pathkind Lab Building, Sector -18, Udyog Vihar, Phase IV Gurugram, (122015) Haryana within 30 days from the date of this Order under intimation to this Forum and the Respondents.
- vi. A Compliance report shall be submitted to this Forum on the action taken in this regard within 30 days.
- vii. Non-compliance with the directions of Forum by the Licensee shall attract remedial action under Sections 142 and 146, read with Section 149 of the Electricity Act 2003.

Dated at Puducherry on this the 10th day of June 2020.

Sd/-

(R. KRISHNAMURTHY)
JERC NOMINATED MEMBER

Sd/-

(A.S. JITENDRA RAO)
LICENSEE MEMBER