

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

PRESENT:

THIRU T. GOPALAKRISHNAN, B.E.,
CHAIRMAN

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

MONDAY, THE 23rd DAY OF AUGUST 2021

CONSUMER CASE No.42/2021

The President,
Nugarvor Nala Sangam
Thirumalairayan Pattinam
Karaikal – 609 606

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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 Engineer, T.R. Pattinam,
Electricity Department,
Karaikal.

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Respondents

This case in C.C. No.42/2021 came up before this Forum for final hearing on 17/08/2021 at Karaikal. 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 has been received in the camp sitting at T.R. Pattinam, Karaikal held on 14.07.2021, from the President, Nugarvor Nala Sangam (Consumer Welfare Association), TR Pattinam, Karaikal. In the complaint, the complainant had stated that bills for the consumers are not being issued at the interval of 30 days. Due to the delay in taking meter reading, the consumption units are recorded in the next slab rate which causes additional amount to be paid by the general public. Meter reading should be taken at the duration of 30 days and after receipt of bill sufficient time have to be given for payment, atleast 10 days duration should be given. The vacancies in the section Office should be filled. The Complainant has also enclosed copy of similar complaint made to the Executive Engineer, Karaikal on 27/05/2021 on the above deficiencies. But the same has not been attended. Hence the Complaint.

2. The complaint has been registered as C.C. No.42/2021 on 14/07/2021 and copy of the Complaint has been handed over to the Executive Engineer, Karaikal with a direction to give reply by 26.07.2021. The Assistant Engineer, Town-I, has filed the reply on 26/07/2021 and the same has been communicated to the Complainant. The hearing was scheduled on 17/08/2021 at Karaikal.

3. In the hearing the Complainant has reiterated that the bills are not issued at the interval of 30 days and the delay in taking meter reading causes raising of bill in the next slab. Hence the consumers are subjected to hardship. As a result number of complaints are received at the Welfare Associations. Further, the duration given for payment is not sufficient and requested to give atleast 10 days.

4. In the Affidavit filed by the Assistant Engineer, Town-I it has been stated that the existing vacancies in the T.R. Pattinam section are caused due to promotion, retirement and transfer. The existing technical staff are engaged in the break down services and maintenance and meter reading. It has been assured to issue the bill as per the billing period in future.

5. The reply of the Respondent is not at all convincing and the delay due to vacancies in the section at TR Pattinam should not be a ground of excuse. A definite time frame should be given that atleast all the vacancies shall be filled up and the regular Meter Reder will be taken without causing any hardship to the consumers. It is due to the delay in billing, the consumers are subjected to higher slab rate. The Department is indirectly billing higher slab rate for the lacunae of the Department at the cost of the general public

6. The Representative of the Complainant has suggested that the work of Meter Reading may be entrusted to the outside agencies so that the readings are taken at correct duration of 30 days without causing any delay. The suggestion of the Complainant is worth considering for the shortage of man power at TR Pattinam section.

7. Observation: Large scale of vacancies at T.R. Pattinam section has caused delay in the billing schedule and the general public are made to suffer for the fault of the Department both on account of higher slab due to delayed meter reading and levying of Belated payment surcharge. The Department should make effort to fill up the vacancies in a time bound manner and till such time the Department may also find possibility of entrusting the work of meter reading to outside agencies to issue bills to the Consumers without any time lag. The delay in the meter reading is wide prevalent in entire Karaikal region due to shortage of meter readers and shortage of necessary materials such as billing forms etc., The billing schedule is continuously violated in most of the cases, resulting raising the bill at higher slab rate. Further adequate time of 21 days in respect of domestic consumer is not given to the consumers after receipt of bills for payment and the consumers are taken for granted. Prompt issue of bills shall entail timely collection of revenue receipts to the Department.