

ELECTRICITY CGRF
(Under The Electricity Act, 2003)
ANDAMAN & NICOBAR ISLANDS
PORT BLAIR

Before:

Shri. R. Ravichandar, Chairman.
Shri. Narayan Chandra Baroi, Member (Licensee).
Smt. Biji Thomas, Independent Member (JERC Nominated).

In the matter of:

Shri. K. Eswar Rao, R/o Shadipur, Port Blair, South Andaman.

.....Complainant

Versus

The Electricity Department, A & N Administration, Port Blair.

.....Respondent

Complaint No. : ANI/CGRF/330/24-25/07 dated 14/06/2024
Complaint : Excess Billing bearing Consumer No. E1/1507 (Domestic)
Date of Hearing : 27/06/2024
Date of Order : 28/06/2024

ORDER

Background

The complainant Shri. K. Eswar Rao, R/o Shadipur, Port Blair, South Andaman filed a complaint vide R.D. No. 600 dated 14/06/2024 regarding excess billing bearing Consumer No. E1/1507 (Domestic).

The complaint was forwarded on 14/06/2024 to the Assistant Engineer (Workshop), Nodal Officer for CGRF, Executive Engineer(HQ), Assistant Engineer-II(HQ), Electricity Department who represents the Respondent/Licensee(ED) for submitting reply/comments and for attending the Hearing fixed on 27/06/2024 at 10:30 a.m. in the Hearing Hall of the Electricity CGRF, A&N Islands, Horticulture Road, Haddo, Port Blair with relevant documents to depose before the Forum. A copy of this letter was also endorsed to the complainant for attending the Hearing on 27/06/2024 at 10.30 a.m.

The Respondent on behalf of Licensee (ED) i.e., Assistant Engineer-II(HQ), Electricity Department filed his letter No. EL/AE/SD-II/1-29/23-24/212 dated 22/06/2024, which was received by the Forum on 24/06/2024, which is kept in case file (**Exbt. -1**).





Hearing on 27/06/2024

The Hearing was held on 27/06/2024 in the Hearing Hall, Electricity CGRF at 10:30 a.m. The following were present: -

- (i) Shri. K. Eswar Rao, Complainant.
- (ii) Shri. Suresh Kumar, AE(W/shop), NO(CGRF), Elect. Dept.
- (iii) Shri. Deepak Mondal, AE-II, Elect. Dept
- (iv) Shri. Santhosh Kumar, LMMR, Elect. Dept.
- (v) Shri. Baukim Mitra, LMMR, Elect. Dept.

Statement of the Complainant

Complainant Shri. K. Eswar Rao stated in his complaint letter dated 13/06/2024 that "I am tenant and an electric domestic New meter digital bearing number E1/1507 installed for my residence. Since August 2023, the exorbitant billing amount is raising from Rs. 413/-, 461/- and 521/- month by month in spite of frequent and long duration of power cuts, low and high voltage with fluctuation in power supply and the bills are raising month by month without any alteration in my residence. Meter reading bills are not supplying very since long.

Since, there was no response a reminder letter no.- I dated 31.01.2024 was addressed again to the EE above with copy to the SE electricity. There after due to non action by the authorities concerned a second reminder letter dated 19.03. 2024 was also submitted to the SE electricity above with copy to the CS, A&N Admn. but in vain.

Even the above said problems are being faced, the meter reading charging bills were raised month by month from Jan 2024 to April 2024. The bills were raised from Rs. 783/-, 777/-, 852/- and 1911/- respectively. This matter was brought to the notice of the house owner also who in response submitted a complaint dated 06.06.2024 to the AE-II electricity, VIP road, Port Blair.

On 12.06.2024 (FN) the said old electric meter box was replaced with new one by one unknown male person in the absence of myself and house owner. The removed and installed meter readings in all respects not known to us. I lodged a complaint in this matter on 13.06.2024 to the SE electricity with copy to the CS and hon'ble LG.

Hence expecting enhancement of exorbitant raising of bill amount month by month without end, this complaint grievance being lodged for relief and redressal in all respects.

Nature of relief sought from the Forum

- a) Excess exorbitant bills raised by the department from August 2023 to till date. The same may be rectified and excess amount paid by us maybe adjusted in future bills.
- b) The removed meter to be preserved for expert technical opinion and new installed meter to be certified with detailed meter certification immediately.



- c) Since, senior citizen attained more than 65 years of age, mentally agony, harassment, panic, financial loss, transporting charges, cost of preparation of complaints by advocate etc to be compensated.
- d) Damages, repairs of TV, fridge, electric bulbs, washing machine, fans and other electric domestic appliances etc to be compensated”.

The complainant submitted copy of his complaint letter addressed to the EE(HQ), SE(Elc.) & AE-II(Elc.) and Rent receipt, which is kept in the case file (Exbt. -2).

Reply of the Respondent/Licensee (ED)

The Assistant Engineer- II(HQ), Electricity Department on behalf of the Respondent/Licensee(ED) in his written submission vide letter No. EL/AE/SD-II/1-29/23-24/212 dated 22/06/2024 has stated that: -

1. “The consumer ledger/profile indicating the monthly unit consumption of the consumer no. E1/1507-Domestic is enclosed.
2. Copy of meter reading book from January 2022 to till date is enclosed.
3. Connected load is 2 KVA.
4. Earthing and Neutral are found OK.
5. Meter testing report shall be provided by EESL for which e-mail has been sent to EESL on 21.06.2024, but till date the report was not received by this department.

It is also to submit that the Smart meter of the above consumer failed on 22.05.2024 and the same was replaced with an electronic meter on 12.06.2024”.

The Respondent/Licensee (ED) has submitted consumer ledger and meter reading book copies, which is kept in the case file(Exbt. -3).

Submission of the Complainant

Complainant Shri. K. Eswar Rao during the hearing raised an issue of excess billing from 08/2023. The complainant also stated that the complaints were given to various level of higher officers but no action was taken by the department.

Submission of the Respondent (Licensee)

The AE-II (HQ) on behalf of the Respondent/Licensee (ED) during the hearing, submitted that the Smart meter is installed and not communicating properly, hence manual readings are being taken. AE also confirmed that no written complaints were received at his office or the copy of the complainant letter addressed to the higher levels (as stated by the complainant) were not marked to him till date.



Forum's Observation

The complainant reported excess billing starting from August 2023 onwards. But the respondent informed that the SMART meter is installed but not communicating properly, leading to manual readings. The meter was replaced on 12.06.24 due to terminal burnt condition.

The complainant claimed to have submitted complaints to higher authorities like SE (Ele.), Chief Secretary, but received no replies. However, the AE confirmed that no written complaints were received in his office, and no copies of complainant letters addressed to higher levels were marked to him. The complainant further stated that the meter was replaced without any prior intimation. In this regard, the Forum directed the respondent to ensure that any future meter replacements or major actions are communicated to the consumers in advance to maintain transparency.

As per the consumption pattern, the readings seem to be in order except for the month of April 2024, which recorded 320 units.

The consumer also stated that due to fluctuation of voltage, the TV and other electronic equipments got damaged. During an inspection on 26.06.2024, the Forum found evidence of neutral leakage, which might have caused voltage fluctuations and subsequent damage to the complainant's TV. Hence, the Forum directed the department to inspect the wiring and earthing status and submit a report in this regard and the Respondent (ED) should direct the complainant to strength the earthing and wiring if any.

The Forum suggested the complainant to install an Earth Leakage Circuit Breaker (ELCB/RCCB) to prevent leakage and ensure the safety of the equipment. Also in this regard, the Forum directed the respondent to educate consumers on the importance of ELCB/RCCB installation for safety and other safety measures to protect their valuable appliances and ensure electrical safety.

The Forum directed the Respondent (ED) to implement a robust system for tracking and acknowledging complaints to ensure that they are addressed promptly, which was not seen in this instant case. Also, the department should investigate why the complaints submitted to higher authorities were not addressed and improve the complaint handling process.

Further, the Forum directed the respondent (ED) to verify that all meters are functioning correctly and replace faulty equipment as needed.

Hence,

It is Ordered:

After detailed deliberations, submissions and documents produced before the Forum, and on the basis of the observation so reached, the following Order is passed: -



1. The Case No. 330 is hereby closed without any merit and specific direction to the Respondent/Licensee (ED) and the complainant consumer, which is particularly noted in this instant case.
2. The Respondent/Licensee (ED) is directed to ensure that any future meter replacements or major actions are communicated to the consumers in advance, to maintain transparency, which was not seen in this instant case.
3. The Complainant is advised to install an Earth Leakage Circuit Breaker (ELCB/RCCB) to prevent leakage and ensure the safety of the equipment.
4. The Respondent/Licensee (ED) is directed to educate consumers on the importance of ELCB installation for safety and other safety measures to protect their appliances and ensure electrical safety.
5. The Respondent/Licensee (ED) is directed to implement a robust system for tracking and acknowledging complaints to ensure that they are addressed promptly, which was not seen in this instant case. Also, the department should investigate why the complaints submitted to higher authorities were not addressed and improve the complaint handling process.
6. The Respondent/Licensee (ED) is directed to verify that all meters are functioning correctly and replace faulty equipment as needed.
7. The Respondent/Licensee (ED) is directed to submit **compliance report within 15 days** from the date of receipt of this order as per JERC Regulation No. 26/2019 under Clause 27(1). **Further, from Sl. No. 2, 5&6 of the above said directions compliance should be provide with supporting documents, if any.**
8. As per JERC Regulation No. 26/2019 under Chapter-IV of 27, non-compliance of the Forum Order shall be treated as violation of the Regulations of the Commission and accordingly liable for action under Section 142 of the Electricity Act 2003.
9. The complainant shall not be harassed overtly or covertly in any manner whatsoever in future for exercising his right by availing the redressal within his jurisdiction.



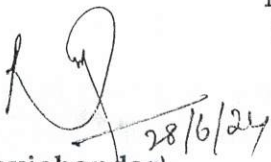
"The complainant, if aggrieved, by non-redressal of his / her grievance by the Forum or non-implementation of CGRF order by the Licensee, may make an Appeal prescribed Annexure-IV, to the **Electricity Ombudsman, Joint Electricity Regulatory Commission for the State of Goa and UTs**, 3rd Floor, Plot No. 55-56, Service Road, Udyog Vihar, Phase-IV, Sector-18, Gurugram - 122015 (Haryana). Phone - 0124-4684708, E-mail : ombudsman.jercuts@gov.in **within one month from the date of receipt of this order**".

[Annexure – IV Appeal Form can be collected from the office of the Forum on any of the working days].

A certified copy of this Order be sent to the Superintending Engineer (Licensee/Respondent), Executive Engineer (HQ), Nodal Officer (CGRF), Assistant Engineer-II(HQ), Electricity Department, Complainant and the Electricity Ombudsman, JERC for the State of Goa & UTs, Gurugram, (Haryana).


(Biji Thomas)
Independent Member
Electricity CGRF


(Narayan Chandra Baroi)
Member (Licensee)
Electricity CGRF


(R. Ravichandar)
Chairman
Electricity CGRF

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AG(ET)