

ELECTRICITY CGRF
(Under The Electricity Act, 2003)
ANDAMAN & NICOBAR ISLANDS
SRI VIJAYA PURAM

Before:

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

In the matter of:

Shri. K. Parasuraman, R/o Dairy Farm, Sri Vijaya Puram, South Andaman.

.....Complainant

Versus

The Electricity Department, A & N Administration, Sri Vijaya Puram.

.....Respondent

Complaint No. : ANI/CG No. 41/2024 dated 05/11/2024.
Complaint : Excess billing bearing Consumer No. H2/7148
(Commercial)
Date of Hearing : 20/11/2024
Date of Order : 02/12/2024

ORDER

Background

Shri. K. Parasuraman, R/o Dairy Farm, Sri Vijaya Puram, South Andaman, filed a complaint vide R.D. No. 856 dated 05/11/2024 regarding installation of faulty meter and raising abnormal electricity billing bearing Consumer No. H2/7148 (Commercial).

The complaint was registered and forwarded to the Licensee (Electricity Department) on 05/11/2024 to the AE(W/shop), Nodal Officer (CGRF), Executive Engineer (HQ) and Assistant Engineer (III), Electricity Department for submitting reply/comments within 15 days and also a copy of this letter was endorsed to the complainant for information.

The AE (III), Elect Dept., vide his letter No. EL/AE/PP/1-12/2023-24/1357 dated 18/11/2024 with enclosures submitted reply / comments on behalf of the Licensee/Respondent (ED), which was forwarded through AE(W/Shop) and received by the Forum vide R.D No. 877 dated 19/11/2024 (the letter is kept in case file) (*Exbt.-1*).

Hearing on 20/11/2024

The Hearing was held on 20/11/2024 in the Hearing Hall, Electricity CGRF at 11:30 a.m. The following were present: -



- (i) Shri. K. Parasuraman, Complainant.
- (ii) Shri. Bipajit Baidya, Complainant representative.
- (iii) Shri. Naveen Lall, AE-III, Elect. Dept.
- (iv) Shri. Dipak Kr. Singh, JE, Elect. Dept.
- (v) Shri. R. Raja, LMMR.

Statement of the Complainant

Complainant Shri. K. Parasuraman stated in his complaint dated 05/11/2024 stated that "I have been provided commercial electric connection bearing A/c. No. H2/7148 during the month of December 2023 situated at Prothrapur Village, Sri Vijaya Puram, the shop in which the commercial electric connection is not functioning since then.

The Electricity Department has installed faulty Meter and raising abnormal bill and this matter was reported to the then Junior Engineer, Electricity Department, Pathergudda but not action has been taken yet. I have personally requested the Junior Engineer and informed the position and requested to raise the Meter Rent charge only but in the meantime concerned Junior Engineer was transferred to elsewhere.

Now the Electricity Department without replacing the meter is sending the electricity consumption charge of Rs.58/- Rs.60/- for the last 2 months.

It is very crystal clear that the Electricity Department was sent abnormal bill amounting to Rs.850/- to Rs.900/- for the previous months from December 2023 to August 2024.

In view of the above, I request your good self to kindly look into this matter and take appropriate action in this regard at the earliest For which act of kindness, I shall ever remain grateful to you."

The complainant enclosed photocopies of complaint letter to the JE, P/Gudda, bill details and Aadhaar card as ID proof, which is kept in the case file (Exbt.-2).

Reply of the Respondent/Licensee (ED)

The Assistant Engineer (W/shop), Nodal Officer (CGRF) on behalf of the Respondent/Licensee(ED) in his written submission letter dated 19/11/2024 stated that "The Junior Engineer, Prothrapur site office vide his letter No. EL/JE/PP-I/1-20/2024-25/354 dated 16.11.2024 (enclosed) in which he has mentioned that a consumer Shri K.Parasuraman with account No.H2/7148 (Commercial) provided electric connection on 10.10.2023.The other details report as follows:-

1. Since October 2023 to January 2024 billing done as per meter reading.

2. From February 2024 the meter is in stuck up condition and since Feb 2024 to May 2024 average Billing done.
3. After request of consumer checked the premises and found the shop is in close position so June 2024 to September 2024 Zero unit billing done.
4. More than Six months electric bills are not paid by the consumer so on 04.09.2024 dismantled notice issued to the consumer."

The Respondent/Licensee(ED) has submitted photocopies of Meter Reading chart, Consumer Ledger, Notice to the consumer, Meter reading record and Meter Testing report, which is kept in the case file **(Exbt.-3)**.

Complainant's Statement

Shri K. Parasuraman, the complainant, contends that the commercial electric meter installed at his shop in Prothrapur Village in December 2023 has been faulty since its installation. He maintains that the shop has remained non-operational, yet the electricity department issued excessive bills ranging from ₹850 to ₹900 for several months. The complainant asserts that multiple complaints to the Junior Engineer yielded no resolution and that the department only started issuing lower bills of ₹58 to ₹60 for the last two months without addressing the underlying issue of the faulty meter. He seeks immediate action to rectify the billing errors and replace the defective meter.

Respondent's Statement

The Respondent, represented by the Junior Engineer of the Prothrapur site office, clarified that Shri K. Parasuraman was provided an electric connection on October 10, 2023, with a functioning meter. Regular readings were recorded until January 2024. The meter reportedly became defective in February 2024, after which billing was done based on average consumption until May 2024. Subsequent inspections revealed the shop to be closed, and from June 2024 onward, billing was done for zero consumption. The respondent emphasized that the consumer has not cleared outstanding dues for over six months, leading to the issuance of a disconnection notice on September 4, 2024.

Reply filed by the Complainant as per direction given by the Forum during the Hearing

Complainant Shri. K. Parasuraman, stated in his complaint dated 05/11/2024 stated that "am writing this complaint to bring to your attention the excessive and unjust electricity billing I have been facing for my small shop. Below are the detailed facts of my case for your kind consideration:

1. Shop Details:

- My shop is small, measuring 3x3.2 meters.
- It has minimal electrical appliances:
- 1 tubelight (18W)



- 1 bulb (9W)
- 1 socket powering a table fan (65W)
- 1 outdoor tubelight (18W)
- Total power consumption: 110W.

2. Billing Issue:

- Despite my low usage, I consistently receive an electricity bill ranging between Rs. 800 to Rs. 900 every month.
- The electricity consumption units on my bill show 70 to 95 units per month, with an average of 83 units.
- Upon calculating, my daily consumption, even if I run all appliances for 24 hours, should not exceed 2.4 units/day ($110W \times 24 \text{ hours} = 2.640 \text{ kWh}$).
- For a full month, this would total 79.2 units ($2.640 \text{ kWh} \times 30 \text{ days}$).
- However, in my area, electricity is not available for 2 to 5 hours every day, making it impossible for me to consume so many units.

3. Meter Issue:

- The energy meter's display is extremely faint and difficult to read unless examined very closely. This issue has existed since the meter was installed/commissioned.
- At the time of installation, I informed the electricity staff about this. They mentioned that there were no new meters available at that time, but assured me it would be replaced once the stock arrived.
- Zero reading not displayed in the energy meter on 11/10/2023 (copy enclosed) at the time of initially installed bearing consumer No. H2/7148.
- The electricity department claims the meter worked for 3 months and then stopped functioning. After that, the department issued me an average bill for the next 3 months. However, the average bill they issued is far higher than it should be. I have attached copies of the bills for your reference.

4. Contradictory Readings:

- According to the electricity department, the meter stopped working after 3 months, and the reading should have been 1431. However, the meter is currently showing a reading of 15221.8
- I have attached photos of the meter readings for your reference, which clearly show discrepancies and prove the negligence in the records submitted by the department.

Request for Action:

I kindly request the Consumer Court to take strict action against the electricity department for their negligence and unjust billing practices. Specifically, I seek:



1. An accurate resolution of my billing issue.
2. Immediate replacement of the faulty meter.
3. Refund of the excess amount charged due to incorrect billing, or adjustment in my upcoming bills based on actual usage."

The complainant submitted photocopies of Meter on 11/10/2023 and 18/11/2024 bearing consumer No. H2/7148, which is kept in the case file (Exbt.-4).

Forum's Observation

The Complainant, Shri K. Parasuraman, claims to have been provided a commercial electric connection (Account No. H2/7148) in December 2023, for a shop situated at Prothrapur Village, Sri Vijaya Puram. He alleges that the electric meter installed at the premises was faulty from the beginning and the shop has not been operational since the connection was established. Despite repeated verbal and written complaints to the Junior Engineer of Pathergudda, no corrective action was taken. The complainant contends that abnormal electricity bills ranging between ₹. 850/- to ₹. 900/- were issued from December 2023 to August 2024, even though he requested the department to levy only the meter rent. Following the transfer of the concerned Junior Engineer, the department continued issuing nominal electricity bills of ₹58 to ₹60 for the last two months without replacing the faulty meter. The complainant seeks urgent intervention for meter replacement and rectification of billing irregularities.

The Respondent, represented by the Junior Engineer, Prothrapur-Site Office, states that a commercial electric connection (Account No. H2/7148) was provided to Shri K. Parasuraman on October 10, 2023. It is reported that the billing from October 2023 to January 2024 was done based on actual meter readings. However, the meter became non-functional in February 2024, and billing from February to May 2024 was carried out based on average consumption. Upon further inspection in June 2024, the shop was found to be closed, and billing for the months of June to September 2024 was done for zero units. A notice of disconnection was issued to the consumer on September 4, 2024, due to non-payment of bills for over six months. The Forum also observed that as per the present practice following in the department if the consumer default on payment of monthly bills more than six months, the software will automatically deleted the consumer from the live list of the department records but the physically disconnection of the defaulted consumer are not happened on regular basis in the field may cause accumulation of arrears and delay in collection of government revenue in time. Forum directed the department to do timely disconnection on priority as any defaulted consumer in future.



The Forum observed the following points:

1. The complainant alleges that the meter was faulty from the outset and that the shop was not operational. However, no proper evidence were provided alongwith the letter dated 29/11/2024 to substantiate his claim.
2. The respondent confirmed that the meter was functional when the connection was provided in October 2023 and that readings were recorded until January 2024.
3. It was acknowledged by the respondent that the meter became faulty in February 2024, leading to average billing.
4. The department acted on the consumer's verbal communication in July 2024 about the shop being closed by issuing zero-unit bills from July 2024 onwards.
5. The consumer has defaulted on bill payments for over six months, prompting the issuance of a disconnection notice.

Forum's Directions

1. Meter Replacement: The electricity department is directed to replace the faulty meter immediately and provide a written report confirming the replacement within 15 days.
2. Billing Rectification: The department is instructed to reassess the billing for the month of May 2024, adjusting the charges based on minimal consumption considering the shop was non-operational and the faulty meter was not replaced within three months as per JERC Regulation.
3. Consumer Dues: The complainant is directed to clear all the arrear bill immediately except the month of May 2024 and should make payment the bill for the month of May 2024 after issuance of the correct bill, if the consumer is not ready to pay arrears in time the department shall have a liberty to disconnect the supply as per JERC Regulation.
4. Consumer Education: The department should issue guidelines to consumers about their rights and responsibilities, especially regarding reporting faults in writing.
5. Future Complaint Mechanism: Both parties are encouraged to maintain records of all communications in writing for prompt resolution of grievances.



Hence,

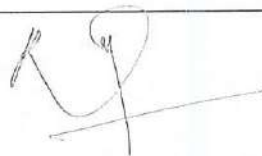
It is Ordered:

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

1. The Complaint No. ANI/CG No. 41/2024 is hereby closed with specific direction to the Respondent/Licensee (ED).
2. The Respondent/Licensee (ED) is directed to replace the defective meter bearing Consumer No. H2/7148 (Commercial) immediately.
3. The Respondent/Licensee (ED) is directed to reassess the billing for the month of May 2024 and adjusting the charges based on minimal consumption considering the shop was non-operational.
4. The complainant is directed to clear all the arrears bill immediately except for the month of May 2024 and the bill for the month of May 2024 should make payment after issuance of the correct bill, if the consumer is not ready to pay the arrears in time the department shall have liberty to disconnection the supply as per JERC Regulation.
5. The Forum directed the Respondent (ED) to do timely disconnection on priority on any defaulted consumers in future to avoid collection of Govt. revenue in time.
6. 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. 31/2024.
7. As per JERC Regulation No. 31/2024 under Chapter-III of 30, 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.
8. 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.

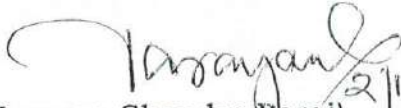
"The complainant, if aggrieved, by non-redressal of his / her grievance by the Forum or non-implementation of CGRF order by the Licensee, may make an Appeal prescribed Annexure-IV, to the **Electricity Ombudsman, Joint Electricity Regulatory Commission for the State of Goa and UTs**, 3rd Floor, Udyog Vihar, Phase, Sector-18, Gurugram - 122015 (Haryana). Phone - 0124-4684709, E-mail: ombudsman.jercuts@gov.in **within one month from the date of receipt of this order**".

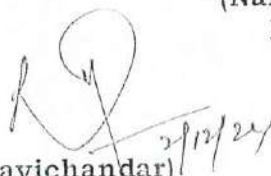
[Annexure - IV Appeal Form can be collected from the office of the Forum on any of the working days].



A certified copy of this Order be sent to the Superintending Engineer (Licensee/Respondent), Executive Engineer (HQ), Nodal Officer (CGRF), Assistant Engineer(III), Assistant Engineer (IT), 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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ACCT)