

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. T. Rajaguru, R/o Aberdeen Bazar, Sri Vijaya Puram, South Andaman.

.....Complainant

Versus

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

.....Respondent

Complaint No. : ANI/CG No. 40/2024 dated 04/11/2024.
Complaint : Excess billing bearing Consumer No. D1/3468 (Domestic)
Date of Hearing : 20/11/2024
Date of Order : 21/11/2024



ORDER

Background

Shri. T. Rajaguru, R/o Aberdeen Bazar, Sri Vijaya Puram, South Andaman, filed an email complaint vide R.D. No. 846 dated 04/11/2024 regarding excess billing bearing Consumer No. D1/3468 (Domestic).

The complaint was registered and forwarded to the Licensee (Electricity Department) on 04/11/2024 to the Assistant Engineer (workshop), Nodal Officer, Executive Engineer (HQ) and Assistant Engineer (I), 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 (I), Elect Dept., vide his letter No. EL/AE/SD-I/HQ/25-3/747/2024 dated 09/11/2024 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. 874 dated 12/11/2024 (the letter is kept in case file) (**Exbt. -1**).

Statement of the Complainant

Complainant Shri. T. Rajaguru stated in his email complaint dated 25/10/2024 stated that "I hope this email finds you well. I am writing to bring to your attention a significant issue regarding the billing of my property located

at D1/3468. For the month of August 2024, I was charged an unexpectedly high amount. This is incorrect as there was no one present at the house during that period and the main switch was turned off. Consequently, I believe it is not possible for such a charge to be accurate, as even the base amount should not apply. I have already lodged a formal complaint on your website (TICKET NO. 24003145 & 24003146), but I have yet to receive a satisfactory or at least a response with full loyalty. Additionally, the amount charged for August has now been marked as due, causing an issue with my bill payment for September 2024. I am eager to pay the September bill promptly; however, the payment portal only allows me to pay the combined total of both August and September. Please note that I am not willing to pay the bill for August 2024 due to the reasons mentioned above. I am however fully prepared to settle the payment for September 2024. I urge you to rectify this matter immediately and provide a solution that will allow me to pay the correct amount for September only. If I do not receive a resolution soon, I will unfortunately be left with no choice but to withhold further payments until this matter is properly addressed".

The complainant enclosed photocopies of online complaint dated 10.09.2024 and e-bill, 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 11/11/2024 stated that:

1. "Consumer Profile and Ledger Sheet from January 2022 to till month September 2024 - (Enclosed).
2. Smart meter detailed report collect from EESL. (Enclosed).
3. EESL Online reading received from through IT Section, Electricity Department. - (Enclosed).
4. Meter reading book from January-2022 to till month (September-2024) of Consumer bearing A/C No. D1/3468 for Domestic Category Single Phase. (Enclosed)".

The Respondent/Licensee (ED) has submitted photocopies of Consumer profile, Ledger sheet, smart meter report and online reading from EESL, Meter reading record, which is kept in the case file **(Exbt. -3)**.

Hearing on 20/11/2024

The Hearing was held on 20/11/2024 in the Hearing Hall, Electricity CGRF at 10:30 a.m. The following were present: -

- (i) Shri. Naveen Lall, AE-I, Elect. Dept.
- (ii) Shri. A. Siddique, JE, Elect. Dept.
- (iii) Shri. Padmanabham, LMMR, Elect. Dept



Complainant's Statement

Shri T Rajaguru raised an issue regarding the electricity bill for August 2024, claiming it was unreasonably high despite the property being unoccupied and the main switch being turned off. He noted that this charge contradicted the actual usage and should not have been applied. Although he had submitted complaints through the department's website, no meaningful response had been provided. Shri Rajaguru stated that he was willing to pay the bill for September 2024 but found himself unable to do so due to the combined billing system. He insisted on immediate rectification of the erroneous charges and threatened to withhold future payments if the issue persisted.

Respondent's Statement

The Electricity department submitted a detailed report in response to the complainant's allegations. The respondent confirmed that the smart meter at Shri Rajaguru's property had not been functioning since April 2024, which necessitated manual billing based on average consumption. They provided evidence, including the consumer's historical ledger sheet, detailed reports from EESL, online readings, and manual meter readings. The respondent clarified that the August 2024 bill was calculated on an average consumption basis due to the unavailability of accurate meter readings and assured that steps were being taken to resolve the issue.

Forum's Observation

The Complainant, Shri T Rajaguru, raised a concern regarding the electricity bill for August 2024 for property number D1/3468. He stated that no one was present at the property during that period, and the main switch was turned off. Despite this, a high electricity charge was levied, which he believes is inaccurate and unjustified. Shri Rajaguru had lodged formal complaints through the electricity department's website under ticket numbers 24003145 and 24003146 but had not received a satisfactory response. He further highlighted that the unresolved issue had caused complications in paying the September 2024 bill, as the payment portal mandates clearing both the August and September bills together. The complainant expressed his willingness to pay for September 2024 but not for August 2024 and insisted on rectification of the matter. He also stated that if the issue remained unresolved, he would withhold further payments until an acceptable resolution was provided.

The Respondent, representing the electricity department, submitted several documents to support their case. These included the consumer's profile and ledger sheet from January 2022 to September 2024, a detailed smart meter report obtained from EESL, online meter readings received through the IT section of the department, and manual meter reading records from January



2022 to September 2024. The respondent explained that the smart meter was not transmitting readings due to a technical issue, and manual readings were being used instead. They clarified that the August 2024 bill was based on average consumption, as the smart meter was identified as non-functional and stuck since April 2024.

The Forum observed that the complainant, Shri T Rajaguru, highlighted valid concerns regarding the bill for August 2024. The forum reviewed the respondent's submission and noted that the smart meter installed at the complainant's property had been non-functional since April 2024, resulting in manual average billing. Additionally, the forum acknowledged that the electricity department had taken steps to rectify the issue by adjusting the bill to zero units for October 2024, but deemed this an inadequate resolution. The forum emphasized that replacing the faulty meter was the only appropriate long-term solution to prevent recurring disputes.

Forum's Directions

1. Meter Replacement:

The respondent is directed to replace the non-functional smart meter at the complainant's property immediately and prioritize this task upon stock availability.

2. Accurate Billing:

The respondent must cease manual average billing and ensure accurate readings are taken, using either a functional smart meter or a temporary working alternative.

3. Complaint Resolution System Improvement:

The electricity department is directed to enhance its grievance redressal system to provide timely and satisfactory responses to consumer complaints.

Based on the findings, the Forum directs the Respondent to replace the defective meter immediately, and since the complainant has withdrawn their complaint, the Forum considers the matter resolved.

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. 40/2024 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. D1/3468 (Domestic), without delay.



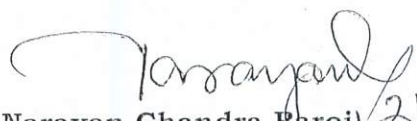
3. The Respondent/Licensee (ED) is directed to submit **compliance report within 15 days** from the date of receipt of this order as per JERC Regulation No. 31/2024.
4. As per JERC Regulation No. 31/2024 under Chapter-III of 30, non-compliance of the Forum Order shall be treated as violation of the Regulations of the Commission and accordingly liable for action under Section 142 of the Electricity Act 2003.
5. 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 (SAD), Nodal Officer (CGRF), Assistant Engineer(I), 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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