

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:

Ms. E. Vengamma, R/o Shiv Colony, Dollygunj, Sri Vijayapuram, South Andaman.

.....Complainant

Versus

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

.....Respondent

Complaint No. : ANI/CG No. 59/2025 dated 20/02/2025.
Complaint : Excess billing bearing Consumer No. G/4259 (Domestic)
Date of Hearing : 11/03/2025
Date of Order : 24/03/2025

ORDER

Background

Ms. E. Vengamma, R/o Shiv Colony, Dollygunj, Sri Vijayapuram, South Andaman, filed a complaint vide R.D. No. 1009 dated 20/02/2025 regarding revising the excess electricity charge bills towards the Consumer No. G/4259 (Domestic).

The complaint was registered and forwarded to the Licensee (Electricity Department) on 20/02/2025 to the AE(W/shop), Nodal Officer (CGRF), Executive Engineer (HQ) and Assistant Engineer-II (HQ), Electricity Department for submitting reply/comments within 15 days and a copy of this letter was endorsed to the complainant for information.

The AE-II, Elect Dept., vide his letter No. EL/AE/SD-II/1-29/2024-25/830 dated 28/02/2025 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. 1021 dated 03/03/2025 (the letter is kept in case file) (**Exbt. -1**).





Hearing on 11/03/2025

The Hearing was held on 11/03/2025 in the Hearing Hall, Electricity CGRF at 10:30 a.m. The following were present: -

- (i) Shri. Jagdish Kumar, Assistant Complainant.
- (ii) Shri. Deepak Mandal AE (II) HQ
- (iii) Shri. Padmanabhan Naidu, Mazdoor.
- (iv) Shri. Chiranjib Biswas, DRM.

Statement of the Complainant

Complainant Ms. E. Vengamma, R/o Shiv Colony, Dollygunj, Sri Vijayapuram, South Andaman had sent two Email complaints. The Email dated 9/02/2025 represents the excess billing for the month of August 2024. In reply this office send an Email dated 12/02/2025 directing the complainant to approach the department for resolving their issues. Again, the complainant sent an Email dated 19/02/2025 stating that they approached with a letter to JE(ED), Dollygunj and they replied because of late intimation they cannot do anything in this matter. Hence the complainant approached the CGRF for further relief. In the Email complainant stated that *"I'm writing to bring to your attention an issue with my electricity bill for the month of August 2024 i.e., amount of Rs. 3423/-. My consumer account number is G/4259. The charge is extremely high relative to my average usage, and I feel there was an error in the calculation or meter reading. I respectfully request that you investigate the case and provide a reason for the charges. If an error is found, I request that you issue a resolved bill as soon as possible. I've attached copies of my previous bills as a reference.*

Please treat this as an urgent problem, as I want to address it before the payment deadline. I am looking forward to your quick response and help in addressing this matter.

Thank you for your attention to this matter

Details are as follows

May 2024: Amount Rs 32

June 2024: Amount Rs 32

July 2024: Amount Rs 56

August 2024: Amount Rs 3423

September 2024: Amount Rs 48

October 2024: Amount Rs 73

We have approached with letter to JE Electricity Department Dollygunj. They said that Because of late intimation they cannot do anything in this matter. Neither they have taken my letter for solving the issues. They said it is due to typing Error and due date is over. But I have paid with penalty amount. How can I get the refunded amount. Please look into this matter as soon as possible. If I have not paid, they would remove my meter." (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 letter dated 28/02/2025 stated that :

1. "On checking profile in WBBS and reading book it was found that there was an typing error due to which the meter reading entered was 16830 instead of 16380 and consumer has paid the wrongly generated bill after due date ie Dt 23/10/2024. Hence, the site Office was unable to rectify/reprocess the wrongly entered meter reading after the due date of billing payment.
2. The consumer ledger/profile indicating the monthly unit consumption of the consumer No G/4259, (Domestic) (Copy enclosed).
3. Connected load is 2 KVA as inspected by the JE's report (Copy enclosed).
4. Earthing and Neutral are found OK.
5. Copy of Meter Reading Book from January 2022 to till date for monthly consumption. (Copy enclosed).

This is for your kind information and further necessary action please."

The Respondent/Licensee (ED) has submitted photocopies of Consumer profile, Meter details, Consumer Ledger and Meter reading record, which is kept in the case file **(Exbt.-3)**.

Complainant's Statement

The complainant contended that they were forced to pay an incorrect electricity bill due to an administrative error, despite their previous low consumption history. The complainant tried to resolve the issue by approaching the electricity department, but the officials refused to accept a written complaint.

They further stated that they paid the bill under compulsion, fearing disconnection of their electricity supply. The complainant strongly emphasized that they should not bear financial losses due to the department's negligence and sought an immediate refund.

Respondent's Statement

The respondent admitted that a clerical mistake resulted in an inflated bill for August 2024. They explained that manual data entry led to an incorrect reading being recorded, and by the time the consumer raised the issue, the bill had already been paid.

The respondent maintained that their billing system does not allow retrospective corrections after payment. However, they acknowledged the consumer's grievance and agreed to conduct a meter accuracy check as directed by the Forum.



Forum's Observation

The present case pertains to an electricity billing dispute for Consumer Account Number G/4259, categorized under the domestic connection. The complainant, who regularly received nominal electricity bills ranging from Rs. 32 to Rs. 73, was unexpectedly issued a bill of Rs. 3,423 for the month of August 2024. This amount was significantly higher than the complainant's usual consumption.

Upon approaching the JE, Electricity Department, Dollygunj, the complainant was informed that the inflated bill was due to a typing error in the meter reading, where 16830 were entered instead of 16380. However, since the bill had already been paid along with a penalty for late payment, the department refused to rectify the bill, stating that corrections could not be made after the due date.

Feeling aggrieved, the complainant approached the Consumer Forum, seeking a refund of the excess amount paid and corrective measures to ensure such errors do not recur.

The complainant raised a formal grievance regarding the excessive electricity bill for August 2024. They stated that their average monthly electricity bill never exceeded Rs. 73, yet an amount of Rs. 3,423 was levied in August, which was disproportionate to their past usage.

Upon approaching the electricity department, the complainant was informed that the bill was erroneously generated due to a clerical mistake in entering the meter reading. The correct reading was 16380, but 16830 was mistakenly recorded, resulting in an inflated bill.

Despite bringing the matter to the department's notice, the complainant was told that rectification was not possible as the payment deadline had passed, and the bill had already been settled with a penalty. The department refused to take corrective action or process a refund.

The complainant, having no alternative, approached the Consumer Forum, seeking redressal and the refund of the excess amount paid.

The respondent acknowledged that a typing error had occurred while entering the meter reading for August 2024. The actual reading should have been 16380, but 16830 were mistakenly recorded, leading to an artificially inflated bill.

The respondent stated that by the time the issue was reported, the payment deadline had already passed. Since the consumer had paid the incorrect bill along with the late fee on October 23, 2024, the system did not allow for retrospective correction.



Additionally, the respondent submitted various supporting documents, including:

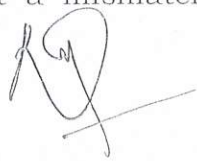
1. Consumer ledger/profile, reflecting monthly unit consumption.
2. Meter reading records from January 2022 onwards.
3. Inspection report by the Junior Engineer (JE), confirming a connected load of 2 KVA.
4. Findings from the site visit, indicating that earthing and neutral wiring were functioning properly.

Based on these submissions, the respondent maintained that while the error was acknowledged, they were unable to process a refund due to system constraints.

The Forum carefully examined the statements of both parties, along with documentary evidence submitted by the respondent. The key observations were as follows: -

1. The complainant's billing pattern showed consistently low electricity usage, with previous bills ranging between Rs. 32 and Rs. 73.
2. The bill for August 2024 was exceptionally high (Rs. 3,423), indicating a clear discrepancy.
3. The respondent admitted that a clerical error in entering the meter reading but refused to rectify it, citing procedural limitations.
4. The consumer paid the bill under duress, as failure to do so would have resulted in meter disconnection.
5. The respondent did not take proactive steps to cross-verify the unusually high bill before issuing it.
6. The respondent did not accept the complainant's written complaint or attempt any resolution before the Forum's intervention.
7. Given the significant financial impact of the erroneous billing, the Forum found merit in the complainant's demand for a refund.

After evaluating the case, the Forum directed to the respondent to immediately correct the wrongly entered meter reading from 16830 to 16380 units. A corrected bill for August 2024 shall be generated based on the actual reading. The excess amount paid by the complainant, along with the penalty, shall be refunded or to be adjusted in future bills. As per the directive of the Forum vide hearing dated 11-03-2025, the respondent installed a parallel meter at the complainant's premises to verify the accuracy of the existing meter and submitted the report on 21-03-2025, found that the meter accuracy is satisfactory and the average consumption per day recorded as 4.166 units. The Forum also noticed that the actual reading recorded in the meter at the time of inspection on 07-03-2025 read as 17329. The present reading taken on in connection with accuracy test on meter was recorded on 19-03-2025 was 17376. On scrutiny of documents submitted by the respondent and based on the site inspection the Forum noticed that a mismatch of meter readings



recorded in the consumer ledger and in the consumer meter. Hence the Forum suspects a coffee shop reading taken by the meter reader, should be avoided in future by giving proper warning and insist a mechanism for surprise check readings at various levels. The respondent must ensure that all the consumer complaints are accepted in writing and to be processed in a time-bound manner. The billing software may be modified to accommodate, if any penalty or additional charges imposed by the respondent due to the error shall be waived or adjusted in the future bills.

Hence,

It is Ordered:

After detailed documents produced before the Forum, and based on the site inspection and the observation so reached, the following Order is passed: -

1. The Complaint No. ANI/CG No. 59/2025 is hereby closed with specific direction to the Respondent/Licensee (ED) and the Complainant.
2. The Respondent/Licensee (ED) is directed to immediately correct the wrongly entered meter reading from 16830 to 16380 units. A corrected bill for August 2024 shall be generated based on the actual reading. The excess amount paid by the complainant, along with the penalty, shall be refunded or to be adjusted in future bills.
3. The Forum directs the respondent to implement a proper verification system to cross-check unusually high bills before issuing to the consumer. The respondent must ensure that all consumer complaints are accepted in writing and to be processed in a time-bound manner. The billing software may be modified to accommodate, if any penalty or additional charges imposed by the respondent due to the error shall be waived or to be adjusted in future bills.
4. The Forum directs the respondent to curtail the coffee shop reading by giving proper warning to the meter readers and insist a mechanism for a surprise check reading at various levels. If any additional amount due to actual consumption recorded in the meter reported by the Respondent dated 19/03/2025 (Present reading 17376) should be recovered from the consumer to avoid revenue loss to the department.
5. The Respondent must ensure that future complaints regarding billing anomalies are addressed in a timely manner to avoid disputes.
6. The Forum advised the complainant that to provide Earth Leakage Protective Device (ELPD) in the wiring to protect the equipment's and loss of life, due to leakage.

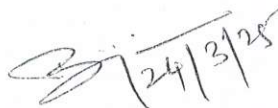


7. The Respondent/Licensee (ED) is directed to submit **compliance report within 15 days** from the date of receipt of this order as per JERC Regulation No. 31/2024.
8. As per JERC Regulation No. 31/2024 under Chapter-III of 30, non-compliance of the Forum Order shall be treated as violation of the Regulations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

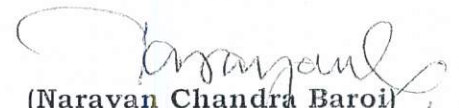
"The complainant, if aggrieved, by non-redressal of his / her grievance by the Forum or non-implementation of CGRF order by the Licensee, may make an Appeal prescribed Annexure-IV, to the **Electricity Ombudsman, Joint Electricity Regulatory Commission for the State of Goa and UTs**, 3rd Floor, Udyog 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 (II), 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


(R. Ravichandar)
Chairman
Electricity CGRF


(Narayan Chandra Baroi)
Member (Licensee)
Electricity CGRF

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