

**Before Maharashtra State Electricity Distribution Co. Ltd.'s  
Consumer Grievance Redressal Forum  
Nagpur Urban Zone, Nagpur**

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**Case No. CGRF(NUZ)/070/2005**

- Applicant : Shri Ashish B. Karale,  
Plot No. 131 (B), Pande-Layout,  
Khamla Road,  
Nagpur.
- Non-Applicant : The Nodal Officer- Executive Engineer,  
Congressnagar Division, NUZ,  
Nagpur representing the MSEDCL.
- Quorum Present : 1) Shri S.D. Jahagirdar, IAS (Retd),  
Chairman,  
Consumer Grievance Redressal Forum,  
Nagpur Urban Zone,  
Nagpur.
- 2) Shri Shrisat  
Member secretary,  
Consumer Grievance Redressal Forum,  
Nagpur Urban Zone,  
Nagpur.

**ORDER (Passed on 09.12.2005)**

The present grievance application has been filed before this Forum on 10.11.2005 in the prescribed schedule "A" as per Regulation 6.3 of the Maharashtra Electricity Regulatory Commission (Consumer Grievance Redressal Forum & Ombudsman) Regulations, 2003 here-in-after referred-to-as the said Regulations.

The applicant's grievance is that meter readings were not recorded properly and that the meter reader's behavior is malafide. He has requested that appropriate penal action may be taken against the concerned meter reader for dereliction

of his duty and for harassment of the applicant. He has also demanded compensation towards his mental harassment.

The matter was heard by us on 05.12.2005 on which date both the parties present made their respective submissions before us.

Documents produced on record by both of them are also perused and examined by us.

After receipt of the present grievance application, the non-applicant was asked to submit before this Forum his parawise remarks on the applicant's application in terms of Regulations 6.7 & 6.8 of the said Regulations. Accordingly, he submitted his parawise report on 05.12.2005. A copy thereof was given to the applicant before the case was taken up for hearing on 05.12.2005 and he was given opportunity to offer his say on this parawise report also.

It is the contention of the applicant that his house was rented out by him to a tenant who was paying the electricity bills of the meter, being meter number 9002235200, regularly. It is his say that wrong readings were deliberately recorded by the meter reader on 04.03.2005, 04.05.2005 and 04.07.2005. According to him, as many as 414 units are shown to have been consumed in the billing month of May, 2005 with a remark "reading not available". It is his further say that the meter in question was working properly and that it was also accessible and also that there was no question of any meter reading as not available. He strongly contended that the meter reader did not at all check and record proper final reading of the meter in question while he attended his job of meter reading. He did this deliberately.

According to him, a similar mistake was committed by the same meter reader in the billing month of July, 2005 which is showing consumption of units as low as 272 units during the summer months. Here also, it is his strong contention that the initial and final reading of the meter respectively shown as 11749 and 12021 were not only incorrect but they were also manipulated by the same meter reader with an ulterior motive to deliberately charge less amount of energy charges to the applicant's tenant.

He added that as many as 1065 units are shown to be consumed against the meter in question during a small period of 45 days only from 04.07.2005 to 18.08.2005 which is not only abnormally excessive but it is also shown so deliberately by the concerned meter reader.

He strongly contended that his tenant left the premises in question in the month of August, 2005 and that the concerned meter reader has shown manipulated readings in the meter with an ulterior motive to help the tenant since he was leaving his house.

According to him, he had visited the Officers of the non-applicant Company 5--6 times and further that he was compelled to pay the revised bill for Rs. 3500/- himself when this was the responsibility of his tenant. The financial loss caused to him is on account of mischievous and deliberate behavior of the meter reader who recorded wrong readings and manipulated the initial and final readings in the meter in question during the period from the billing month of May, 2005 to September, 2005.

He has demanded stringent action against the meter reader concerned and also compensation towards his

harassment caused by the wrong and mischievous action of the concerned meter reader.

He has produced copies of the following documents in support of his contentions.

- 1) His energy bill dated 19.05.2005 for Rs.1390/- for the period from 04.03.2005 to 04.05.2005 for 414 units on average basis.
- 2) His application, being application dated 30.08.2005, addressed to the Executive Engineer (Adm), on the subject of recording of wrong meter readings of his meter.
- 3) Spot inspection report dated 23.09.2005 of the Sub-Engineer, Ajni S/stn. MSEDCL, NUZ, Nagpur with reference to the applicant's oral complaint.
- 4) His energy bill dated 16.09.2005 for 600 units again on average basis for the period from 04.07.2005 to 04.09.2005 for Rs. 2190/-.
- 5) A chart showing details of actual readings of the meter in question according to the applicant's knowledge and those recorded by the meter reader between the period from 04.03.2005 to 04.09.2005.
- 6) Payment receipt dated 23.08.2005 for Rs. 3500/- against the non-applicant's provisional bill.
- 7) His energy bill dated 16.07.2005 on average basis for 18 units for Rs. (-) 412=14.

Relying on these documents, it is the contention of the applicant that stringent action may be taken against the

concerned meter reader for his serious lapses. He also requested that appropriate compensation be awarded to him.

The non-applicant has stated in his para-wise report that the meter, being meter number 2235200, was being used by the applicant since the meter in question is in the name of the applicant. Whether this meter was being used by the applicant's tenant is not known to his office nor there is any office record to that effect. The terms of agreement between the applicant who is the owner of the meter and his tenant are beyond the scope of his office. According to him, the applicant is the concerned consumer and that it is his responsibility to pay the electricity bills and to check correctness of the meter readings when bills are served.

He added that the electricity bill for the month of May, 2005 was served on the applicant on average basis because the meter reading was not available. There was no complaint from the applicant when this bill was served on him.

He further stated that when the applicant alleged that the meter reader has taken wrong readings in the context of his electricity bill for July, 2005, his complaint was attended immediately on 18.08.2005 by his Sub-Engineer, Ajni Centre. He has produced a copy of the inspection report dated 18.08.2005 of the Sub-Engineer concerned recommending charging of 1316 units to the applicant for the period from March, 2005 to July, 2005 i.e. for a period of four months. He strongly contended that the applicant's bill was correct up to the reading of 13065 that was recorded on 18.08.2005 at the time of the Sub-Engineer's spot inspection and that slab benefit for the differential units between the final reading of 13065 and 11749

i.e. for 1316 units was calculated on 24.08.2005 for four months. The relevant details thereof are shown in the small table given in his parawise report. There-upon, the applicant was served with a revised bill of Rs. 3500/- on 23.08.2005 which the applicant paid 27.08.2005 without raising any protest.

It is his contention that the applicant's grievance was promptly attended and resolved and that there was no reason to dispute action taken.

He has produced copies of following documents in support of his contentions.

- 1) The applicant's application dated 30.08.2005 on the subject of correction of wrong readings of his meter.
- 2) Spot inspection report dated 24.08.2005 of the Jr. Engineer (Billing).
- 3) Applicant's application dated 18.08.2005 addressed to the Assistant Engineer, Ajni Centre on the subject of recording of correct meter readings.
- 4) Spot inspection report dated 18.08.2005 of the Sub-Engineer, Ajni Sub-Stn. MSEDCL, NUZ, Nagpur.
- 5) The applicant's CPL for the period from Nov. 1997 to November, 2005.

The non-applicant lastly submitted that the grievance application in question may be dismissed.

We have carefully gone through all documents produced on record by both the parties and also all submissions made before us by both of them.

In the instant case, the basic complaint of the applicant is that wrong readings were deliberately recorded by the concerned meter reader particularly when his meter was

working properly and showing correct meter readings from time to time. It is his say that the meter was also accessible at all the times and that manipulated readings were recorded by the concerned meter reader from the billing month of May, 2005 to September, 2005.

In this context, mere perusal of the applicant's CPL produced on record shows that there is a reason to believe the applicant's contentions.

The bi-monthly bill for the month of May, 2005 pertaining to the period from March, 2005 to May, 2005 shows the same initial and final reading of 11749 of the meter. The applicant is charged in this bill for 414 units on average basis. Here, the contention of the applicant is that his meter was working properly and that appropriate final reading was also displayed by the meter and it was available for reading. However, the meter reader concerned has not recorded the actual final reading of this meter. Even the non-applicant has also admitted this position during the course of hearing.

Not only this, but the meter readings shown in the billing month of July, 2005 are also not believable in as much as a total consumption of 272 units only is shown in this billing month which covers a period of two summer months. Here also, the submission of the applicant that very low consumption was erroneously shown deserves to be accepted since there is a strong logic behind it.

The billing month for September, 2005 is again showing the same initial and final reading at 13065 and the applicant is charged again on average basis for 600 units.

The trend of recorded meter readings go to prove beyond doubt that the meter reader concerned has not only recorded wrong readings but the same are also manipulative in nature.

Even the non-applicant has also admitted during the course of hearing that the concerned meter reader had erred and that there was a serious lapse on his part.

The non-applicant has shown to us during the course of hearing a show-cause-notice issued to the concerned meter reader asking him to show cause as to why the amount of Rs. 3500/- of the applicant's bill should not be recovered from him because of wrong readings recorded by him. This demonstrates that the non-applicant also does not dispute that there was a serious lapse on the part of the concerned meter reader. This in turn, strongly supports the logical stand of the applicant that it was the concerned meter reader who deliberately committed mistakes in recording the meter readings.

It is also pertinent to note that the spot inspection report dated 23.09.2005 of the Sub-Engineer, Ajni S/stn. MSEDCL, NUZ, Nagpur contains a remark that the meter reader is not recording meter readings every month. This spot inspection report has also recommended correction of the applicant's bill.

It is true that the applicant's bill has now been corrected up-to the final meter reading of 13065 by the non-applicant and that slab benefit has also been given for 1316 units on 24.08.2005. It is also true that a revised bill of Rs. 3500/- was issued to the applicant for four months which has



also been paid by him on 27.05.2005. Hence, the complaint of the applicant in respect of his bill amount is now settled. However, the fact remains that avoidable harassment was caused to the applicant because of the deliberate and wrong doings of the concerned meter reader.

We are fully convinced that stringent action ought to have been taken by the non-applicant against the concerned meter reader. In fact, the main grievance of the applicant is this only.

In view of above, we award expenses of Rs. 500/- to the applicant which the non-applicant should pay to him on or before 31.12.2005. We further direct that this amount of Rs.500/- should be recovered by the non-applicant from the concerned meter reader.

In the result, the applicant's grievance application stands disposed of accordingly.

The non-applicant shall report compliance of this order to this Forum on or before 31.12.2005.

Sd/-  
(M.S. Shrisat)  
Member-Secretary

Sd/-  
(S.D. Jahagirdar)  
CHAIRMAN

**CONSUMER GRIEVANCE REDRESSAL FORUM  
MAHARASHTRA STATE ELECTRICITY DISTRIBUTION CO LTD's  
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