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Office of Electricity Ombudsman

(A Statutory Body of Govt. of NCT of Delhi under the Electricity Act, 2003)

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Appeal No. F. ELECT/Ombudsman/2006/143

Appeal against Order dated 30.11.2006 passed by CGRF – NDPL on Complaint No.: C.G.No. 0930/10/06MDT, (K.No. 36405067143)

In the matter of:

Shri Gian Chand, Shri Lal Chand - Appellant

Versus

North Delhi Power Ltd. - Respondent

Present:-

Appellant Shri Amit Kumar son of the appellant

Respondent Shri Banwari Lal Gupta, Commercial Manager
Shri Mudat Bansal, HOG (R&C) and
Shri Suraj Das Guru, Executive (Legal) attended on behalf of
NDPL

Date of Hearing: 08.03.2007, 19.03.2007

Date of Order : 03.04.2007

ORDER NO. OMBUDSMAN/2007/143

Consumer filed this appeal against CGRF order dated 30.11.06 in the case no. 0930/10/06MDT.

Before the CGRF, the appellant raised objection to the accuracy of reading of his electricity meter recording consumption of 4289 units for one month period from 20.06.2006 to 25.07.2006 whereas earlier only 350 units in all were recorded since the installation of meter on 24.10.2005.

The CGRF, after giving a personal hearing to the appellant and the Discom, passed the order dated 30.11.06 in which it observed that prior to the disputed period consumption of only 388 units was recorded over 8 months period i.e. 24.10.2005 to

20.06.2006. The consumption after 25.07.06 was only 535 units from 25.07.2006 to 13.11.2006. CGRF further observed that as per norms laid down in the tariff schedule approved by DERC for a consumption of 4289 units a load of 45 KW shall be required. The connected load was found 9.1 KW only, as such the recording of 4289 units in one month period appears to be impossible.

CGRF further observed that the meter installed is an electronic type and the possibility of jumping of the figures is ruled out. The only possibility is that meter might have remained unread / under read during the period 24.10.2005 to 20.06.2006. In view of the above observations, CGRF ordered that the consumption of 4677 units recorded till 25.07.2006 be spread over a period of 24.10.2005 to 25.07.2006 giving due slab benefit to the consumer. CGRF also observed that fall in consumption after 25.07.2006 can be due to cautious approach taken by the consumer after getting the hefty bill for an amount of Rs.20,000/- approx.

Not satisfied with the orders of CGRF, appellant filed the appeal before the Ombudsman. Hearing was fixed for 08.03.2007.

On 08.03.07, Shri Amit Kumar, son of the appellant attended.

Shri. Banwari Lal Gupta, Commercial Manager and Shri Mudat Bansal, HOG (R&C) attended on behalf of the respondent along with Shri Suraj Das Guru, Legal Executive .

During the hearing, the appellant stated that there is only one room on the second floor where the electricity is being supplied through the meter and consumption cannot be so high as recorded of 4289 units for the month of July 2005.

It was noticed that respondent officials have recorded connected load found 9.1 KW but no details of connected load were recorded. Meter test report dated 27.09.2006 indicates meter was found 1.63% (+). The consumption pattern produced by the respondent indicates that the readings recorded and units billed are as under:

READING DATE	READING (KWH)	CONSUMPTION (KWH)
26.12.2005	58	58
27.01.2006	72	14
25.02.2006	103	31
25.03.2006	128	25
18.04.2006	174	46
20.06.2006	388	214
25.07.2006	4677	4289
15.09.2006	4982	305
13.11.2006	5212	230
09.01.2007	5355	143

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Perusal of above record indicates that very low consumption is recorded upto June 06 whereas all of a sudden high consumption of 4289 units is recorded for the month of July 2006. During the hearing, respondent officials were asked whether the low consumption recorded prior to July 06 is based on actual reading of the meter or the figures are filled up without reading the meter. It was noticed that in the meter installation report dated 24.10.2005 (produced by the respondent) the initial reading of the meter was not found recorded. In absence of such vital information respondent officials could not explain how initial reading has been taken as zero for billing purpose. The appellant informed that meter is displaying 2000 year instead of 2005 or 2006. **This indicates that a new meter was not installed at the appellant's premises and that the meter had already recorded some consumption before installation at the appellant's premises.** The respondent officials were asked for details of the electric equipments found in the appellant's premises where 9.1 KW connected load has been reported, but they could not give any reply. Commercial officer insisted that bills prior to July 2006 are actual reading based bills but could not explain how 4289 units were recorded as consumption for a period of one month with such a load and in such a small room.

Respondent officials were directed to submit the required information by 15.03.2007. In his reply dated 19.03.2007, commercial officer stated that as per records the bills were issued to the consumer on actual consumption basis since 26.12.2005 by taking initial reading as zero at the time of installation. He could not explain how initial reading had been taken as zero when the exact figure of the initial reading in the meter installation report was not recorded. It is quite possible that the initial reading was not zero but a much higher figure since an old meter had been installed at the appellant's premises. The Commercial officer merely stated that the high consumption of the consumer during the period 20.06.2006 to 25.07.2006 can be answered by the consumer himself. Respondent has failed to explain how 4289 units can be consumed in a one room accommodation where sanctioned load is only 1 KW.

The CGRF has rightly recorded that the consumption of 4289 units in one month appears to be impossible and the possibility is that meter might have remained unread / under read during the period 24.04.2005 to 20.06.2006. Since, the initial reading at which meter was installed on 24.10.2005 is not recorded in the meter installation report, it is not correct to take initial reading as zero. Though respondent officials stressed that the bills earlier issued for low consumption of 14 units, 25 units and 31 units in a month are actual reading based bills but this does not appear to be true. **It appears that the initial reading must be quite high and actual readings of the meter were not taken till June 2006, therefore when actual reading was taken and recorded in July 2006, it was a big figure and resulted in a huge bill.**

Perusal of consumption pattern shows that considering the small area (1 room) and the connected load, the readings recorded after 25.07.2006 onwards appear to be based on actual readings of the meter. Therefore only bills prior to 25.07.2006 need to be revised on the basis of average consumption recorded after 25.07.2006 for equivalent corresponding period.

The Discom is directed to cancel the bill for July 2006 and revise the bills for the period from 24.10.05 to 25.07.06 on the basis of average of the appellant's consumption for the correct period i.e. from 25.07.06 to 25.03.07. No LPSC is to be charged.

The CGRF order is modified to the extent mentioned above.

अशा मेहरा
(Asha Mehra)
Ombudsman