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Office of Electricity Ombudsman

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

B-53, Paschimi Marg, Vasant Vihar, New Delhi – 110 057

(Phone No.: 32506011, Fax No.26141205)

Appeal No. F. ELECT/Ombudsman/2007/157

Appeal against Order dated 23.02.2007 passed by CGRF – NDPL in C.G.No.01023/12/06/MDT (K.No 31300138260)

In the matter of:

Shri Rajeev Kumar Goel - Appellant

Versus

M/s North Delhi Power Ltd. - Respondent

Present:-

Appellant Shri Rajeev Kumar Goel

Respondent Shri B.L. Gupta, Commercial Manager
Shri Gagan Sharma, Assistant (R&C) and
Shri Vivek, Executive (Legal) all on behalf of NDPL

Date of Hearing: 10.05.2007

Date of Order : 15.05.2007

ORDER NO. OMBUDSMAN/2007/157

The appellant filed this appeal on 06.03.2007 against the CGRF order dated 23.02.2007, in regard to K. No. 31300138260, at his residence K-13, 2nd floor, Model Town III, Delhi – 110009.

Perusal of contents of the appeal, the reply of the respondent and the CGRF records shows that the old meter was replaced by an electronic meter on 08.02.2006. The dispute started when the appellant received a bill for a period of 4 months 18 days i.e. from 02.05.2006 to 20.09.2006 for 3343 units.

The appellant lodged a complaint on 09.10.2006 with the NDPL for excess consumption recorded by the meter. The meter was tested by the Discom on 03.11.2006 and it was found 2.67% fast. The meter testing report shows that no reporting was made on the ELT problem, even though it is required to be reported upon

as is seen from the Meter Testing Form which provides for a column for such remarks, to be made by the testing team.

In the meantime on the basis of information conveyed by NDPL's call centre, the appellant arranged to get the ELT fault removed through NDPL's electrician.

As per the appellant, excess reading was recorded due to ELT problem and it was the duty of NDPL meter reader to inform him about the ELT problem. The NDPL however held that even if the ELT indicator was short it was the responsibility of the consumer to keep its wiring in good working condition.

The appellant filed a complaint with the CGRF-NDPL on 13.12.2006.

CGRF observed in its order dated 23.02.2007 that 3343 units recorded between 02.05.2006 and 20.09.2006 gives an average of 726 units per month which appears on higher side as compared to consumption for corresponding period of previous years. However, the responsibility of keeping internal wiring in order lies squarely on the consumer. Consumer should have taken the remedial measures without waiting for lodging complaint and for their testing. No relief was granted to the complainant.

Not satisfied with the CGRF order, the appellant filed this appeal before Ombudsman.

The appellant stated that 1) the electrician of NDPL removed the ELT problem; and 2) that had the electricity bill been sent for 2 months period (which is normally done) instead of 4 months and 18 days, he would have come to know about the ELT fault earlier.

The fault was got removed, only after receipt of the bill. In his appeal the appellant has requested for revision of the inflated bill.

The case was fixed for hearing on 10.05.2007.

The appellant attended in person.

Shri B. L. Gupta (Commercial Manager), Shri Gagan Sharma (Assistant – R&C) and Shri Vivek (Ex. Legal) attended on behalf of NDPL.

The appellant repeated what was stated earlier by him, that had the NDPL informed him about checking of the internal wiring at the time of the installation of the electronic meter, this problem of ELT would not have occurred. Also if the bill had been sent after two months as it is usually done, the problem would have come to light earlier. He is now faced with a high consumption bill of 4 months 18 days showing 3343 units.

In this connection, it may be noted that as per DERC guidelines "licensee is required to check whether there is ELT problem or not and inform the consumer accordingly to get the fault removed within 7 days and only thereafter electronic meter may be installed". In this case the electronic meter was installed on 08.02.2006 and meter change report does not indicate whether DERC guidelines were followed or not as nothing is mentioned in the meter change report whether ELT problem was observed or not.

It is a fact that a change may be required in the internal wiring of a consumer when an electronic meter is to be installed whereas the same internal wiring could continue without any problem in the case of an electro mechanical meter. Thus, the internal wiring needs to be changed only because the electronic meter records higher consumption of the 2 - the incoming line current and the outgoing neutral current. It is in this background that the same internal wiring which was ok for an electro mechanical meter needs to be corrected when an electronic meter is to be installed. Therefore, it is the duty of the Discom to educate / inform the consumer about the ELT problem if any and check the internal wiring before installing the electronic meter.

Whenever ELT indicator glows it indicates that incoming line current and outgoing neutral current are not same, may be due to common neutral wires or connections etc. Under such condition the meter will record consumption higher than the actual electricity supplied to the consumer and this excess consumption can be termed as "fictitious energy" which licensee has not supplied. Because of fictitious energy recorded by the meter, inflated bill is raised and the consumer is asked to pay for fictitious energy recorded by the meter which in fact consumer has not used.

The purpose of installation of the meter is to record the energy supplied by the Discom for the purpose of raising the bill against the consumer for consumption. Obviously, the bill is raised on the basis of energy supplied by the Discom, and not for the fictitious energy which the consumer has not consumed. Therefore, the bill for the disputed period which has shown higher consumption than actually utilized by the consumer needs to be revised.

In accordance with the DERC regulations assessment may be made for the disputed period i.e. 02.05.2006 to 20.09.2006 on the basis of average consumption for a period of 6 months before 02.05.2006 and 6 months after 20.09.2006.

The Discom is directed to revise the bill accordingly

The order of the CGR is set aside.

Asha Mehra
(Asha Mehra)
Ombudsman