

## THE ELECTRICITY OMBUDSMAN, UTTARAKHAND

Shri Amrit Pal Singh  
Wing 7- 1/5, Prem Nagar,  
Dehradun, Uttarakhand

Vs

The Executive Engineer,  
Electricity Distribution Division (Rural)  
Uttarakhand Power Corporation Ltd.  
359/2, Dhrampur, Dehradun, Uttarakhand.

Representation no. 09/2013

### **Order**

The petitioner, Shri Amrit Pal Singh, Wing 7 – 1/5, Prem Nagar, Dehradun, approached the office of Ombudsman on 21.06.2013 against the order of the Consumer Grievance Redressal Forum, Garhwal zone (hereinafter referred to as Forum) dated 24.05.2013 in the case of the petitioner against the Uttarakhand Power Corporation Ltd. (hereinafter referred to as respondent).

2. The petitioner has stated that he has a domestic connection no. 972/21231/077771 of 1 KW. The meter installed at petitioner's premises was defective since December 2010. It was however replaced only on 24.09.2012. For 16 months the respondent was sending IDF bills. The petitioner has also complained that the meter reader doing the monthly checking found the meter to be defective however the officer of the respondent who replaced the meter recorded it as a matter of meter jumping in the sealing certificate. Further the sealing certificate was given to him 20 days after the meter was replaced. Subsequent to this the petitioner was served a bill in January 2013 for Rs. 89,358.00 for two months. The petitioner approached the SDO in this matter but did not get a satisfactory reply. Thereafter, the petitioner approached the Forum on 28.01.2013. The Forum issued their order on 24.05.2013. The petitioner not satisfied with the order of the Forum approached the Ombudsman with the prayer that

1. The revised bill may be issued on the average of MRI of the new meter.
  2. Compensation may be granted for not replacing the IDF meter.
  3. Suitable action should be taken against the employee for doing forgery in sealing certificate.
  4. The amount deposited against the old and new bills may be adjusted.
3. The petitioner had approached the Forum on 28.01.2013 stating that he had a domestic connection no. 972/21231/077771 of 1 KW. The petitioner has a two room house where his old mother lives. The meter installed at petitioner's premises was defective which was found defective by meter reader when he visited the premises for monthly reading but a sealing certificate for meter jumping was given by the employee who replaced the meter and the department served a bill in January 2013 for Rs. 89,358.00 for two months. The petitioner did not get any satisfactory reply from the respondent and therefore approached the Forum for justice. The Forum after perusing all the papers supplied by the respondent ordered that the bills be reassessed on the basis of the average consumption as shown by the respondent in the statements produced by them before the Forum.
4. The brief facts of the case are that the petitioner had a domestic connection from 15.07.1991 of 1 KW. The last consumption recorded by the meter reader for the period 31.03.2007 to 31.05.2007 was 1091 units. Thereafter the petitioner started receiving NA/IDF bills. The meter was finally replaced on 24.09.2012. The sealing certificate of the old meter on that date shows a reading of 27180. The sealing certificate was signed by the petitioner. On the basis of the units shown in the meter, the respondent sent a bill for the unbilled amount of units for Rs. 89,358.00 to the petitioner in the bill for the month of January 2013. Thereafter the petitioner approached the respondent and on getting no relief approached the Forum. The Forum ordered MRI to be carried out on the new meter installed on 24.09.2012. The Forum then ordered that the respondent revise the bill sent to the petitioner. Instead of complying with the order of the Forum the respondent threatened the petitioner with disconnection on 29.09.2013 and asked the petitioner to deposit the amount of the bill. The petitioner deposited Rs. 30,000.00 as part payment.
5. A perusal of all the papers submitted by the two parties shows that till 31.05.2007 the meter appeared to be functioning properly with the reading standing at 1091 on that

date. As per the Consumer History report, though the bills started coming as NA, the reading stood at 1091 up to August 2010. In the bill for October 2010 reading at (MU-Metered Unit) was shown as 1200 and in the bill for December 2010 again as MU reading was shown as 1326. Thereafter from February 2011, the respondent started sending IDF bills. This continued for nearly 19 months till 24.09.2012 when a new meter was installed. The sealing certificate for the old meter does not give any explanation as to why the old meter was removed. As the meter was removed, it is presumed that it was defective. If the meter was defective, why is emphasis being placed on the figure 027180 which is being claimed as the meter reading. Moreover this figure appears to have been added after the preparation of the certificate. This is further bolstered by the fact that the petitioner has claimed that he was not given the sealing certificate for 20 days after the event.

6. The reading of the new meter from 24.09.2012 to 09.05.2013 shows usage of 968 units in seven and half months. From this it appears that the average consumption of the consumer is 130 units per month. Keeping all these facts in mind, the quantum jump in usage as shown by the purported reading in the sealing certificate (27180-1091) would mean a consumption of approximately 400+ units per month.
7. In reply to the petition, the respondents have stated that they have revised the bills of the petitioner in the following manner and the same has been entered in the consumer ledger;
  - (1) For the period 31.03.2007 to 31.05.2007 for 1091 units balance Rs. 451.00 due from the petitioner
  - (2) Revised bill from 31.05.2007 to 24.09.2012 for 10432 units on the basis of average consumption of new meter as per MRI report dated 09.05.2013 for a sum of Rs. 25,691.30 (instead of Rs. 89,358.00 for 26089 units as raised earlier.)
  - (3) From 24.09.2012 to 11.07.2013 on actual consumption recorded by the new meter Rs. 4,253.58
  - (4) Total dues from 31.03.2007 to 11.07.2013 = Rs. 30,395.88 less payment already made by the petitioner Rs. 32,330.00.

(5) Net dues (–) Rs. 1,934.12.

On the last date for arguments 13.08.2013, the petitioner accepted the calculations as shown above.

8. The reassessment appears to be in order and thus the question of dues has been settled, leaving the question of compensation as demanded by the petitioner. The petitioner has withdrawn his request for compensation in view of the matter having been settled. The order of the Forum is upheld with modification. The Executive Engineer in his statement dated 20.07.2013 has informed that action has been recommended against the meter reader. The department is advised to follow this up and ensure proper punitive action is taken.
9. Though the petitioner has withdrawn his demand for compensation for not following the SOP in replacement of the IDF meter, this is a very serious matter. Time and again cases of negligence on the part of the staff in replacing the IDF meter have been coming up. There is no doubt that the concerned staff has shown negligence in continuing the IDF bills for prolonged period without taking corrective action. It is advised that the department take cognizance of this matter and initiate action against erring staff. Instructions in this regard may be reiterated and suitable action taken in cases of negligence.

Dated: 22.11.2013

(Renuka Muttoo)  
Ombudsman