

THE ELECTRICITY OMBUDSMAN, UTTARAKHAND

Smt. Sobha Raturi
W/o Shri Dinesh Prasad Raturi
Chandra Vihar, Kargi
Dehradun, Uttarakhand

Vs

The Executive Engineer,
Electricity Distribution Division (South)
Uttarakhand Power Corporation Ltd.
18, EC Road, Dehradun, Uttarakhand

Representation No. 04/2015

Order

The petitioner approached the Ombudsman with a petition dated 24.02.2015 against the Consumer Grievance Redressal Forum, Garhwal zone (hereinafter referred to as Forum) order dated 21.01.2015 in her complaint against the Uttarakhand Power Corporation Ltd. (hereinafter referred to as respondent).

2. The petitioner states that she started construction of her residence in October 2013 and requested for a temporary connection for this purpose. The respondent placed a temporary meter on her premises on 24.01.2014. At the time of installation the meter had an initial reading of 6150 units. The petitioner states that on 27.03.2014 she was informed that there was a reading of 6225 on the meter. Thus she had consumed 115 units during 2 months. The petitioner states that she paid the bill within a week of receiving the same. The respondent removed the meter on 08.05.2014 so that the meter for the petitioner's permanent connection could be installed. She however did not receive any bill for the period 27.03.2014 to 08.05.2014 when the meter was removed. On taking up the matter with the respondent she was given a bill with a reading of 11722 units having been recorded during this period. The total amount of the bill was Rs. 24,228.00. The petitioner shocked at this high reading of consumption of 5457 units in one and half months against 115 units in 2 months felt that there may

have been technical fault in the meter for this wrong reading. On not getting any satisfactory response from the different officials of the respondent the petitioner approached the Forum.

3. The petitioner informed the Forum that the electricity was only used for cutting tiles at her premises and such a high consumption was not correct. On the orders of the Forum the JE did an inspection of the premises of the petitioner on 03.01.2015. The petitioner also provided photographs of her premises to the Forum. However the Forum ordered against the petitioner. Aggrieved by the order of the Forum the petitioner has approached the Ombudsman with the prayer that the order of the Forum be squashed and the petitioner be given relief.
4. The Forum in their order dated 21.01.2015 have stated that as per the sealing report it appears that the maximum demand at the petitioner's premises was 7.9 KW and hence up to 8 KW was used by the petitioner. They have also referred to the test bench report which stated that the meter was found OK. Basing their order on these two documents, the Forum held that the bill sent by the respondent was correct and dismissed the complaint.
5. The respondent in their statement have claimed that the meter was removed on 08.05.2014 and the meter reading was informed to the petitioner at the time of removal of meter. The respondent also claims that as per the enquiry during this period the petitioner was using 7.9 KW during this period and hence was making excessive use of power during this period. The respondent further informs that an MRI of the meter was carried out on 17.12.2014 in the presence of the petitioner and copy of this report was presented before the Forum on the basis of which the Forum decided the case. The respondent has made two points a) that the petitioner was found to be using 7.9 KW load during the period the meter was installed at her premises b) the lab report showed that the meter was functioning correctly.
6. However unfortunately no proof has been offered by the respondent regarding use of 7.9 KW load by the petitioner. The original sealing certificate has not been produced instead copies dated 10.11.2014 and 14.01.2015 have been provided. The sealing certificate dated 10.11.2014 mentions on top 'duplicate copy', it does not mention any load and mentions final reading of 11722 metered units. Further it mentions "dismantling pending u s par meter."

7. The certificate dated 14.01.2015 states 'final sealing', this certificate also mentions the final reading as 11722 but shows the TP burnt. On this certificate the JE has recorded MD 7.9 KW and dated it 14.01.2015. There are a number of cuttings in this certificate, beginning with the date which has originally been recorded as 20.05.2014 and then cut and date 14.01.2015 recorded. Similarly the dial seal number and TP seal number were different from those recorded on the certificate dated 10.11.2014. Those have been struck off and the same seal numbers as mentioned in the certificate of 10.11.2014 entered. All these cuttings raise a question about the genuineness of this certificate. Further neither of these certificates show the date of removal of the meter from the premises of the petitioner.
8. The Lab Test report only provides that the meter was OK but gives no details of the load or any other factors like final reading etc. In the absence of any proof by the respondent, it is difficult to give credence to the statement that there was a demand of more than the sanctioned load of 2 KW as mere observation on a copy of the sealing certificate is not sufficient proof. The final bill has been sent for the period 27.03.2014 to 15.05.2014 whereas the meter was removed on 08.05.2014. 11722 has been taken as the final reading on 15.05.2014. The respondent has not been able to establish what was the reading on 08.05.2014.

The date of removal (08.05.2014) has been corroborated by the respondent in all communication before the Forum and in their statement before the Ombudsman. Subsequently the respondent appears to have rethought the matter and has given a statement that the meter was only removed on 15.05.2014. As there is no sealing certificate available this statement appears to be an afterthought. There is no explanation regarding the location of the meter after 08.05.2014.

9. Due to the discrepancies mentioned above it is very difficult to establish what was the load being used by the petitioner and what is the total consumed units during the three and half months the meter was installed at her premises. However taking the fact that the connected load was 2 KW, if it is calculated that this load was used for 10 hours per day it would amount to 20 units per day and 600 units per month, hence the total consumption for the period 21.01.2014 to 08.05.2014 (3½ months) would be 600 x 3.5 amounting to a total consumption of 2100 units. This would appear to be reasonable in view of the work carried out at the premises of the petitioner as seen

from the photographs submitted before the Forum. It is ordered that the last bill be revised for 2100 units and amount already paid against the intermediate bill be deducted from the total. No LPS to be charged. The petitioner should pay within 15 days of receiving the bill. Order of the Forum is set aside.

Dated: 03.06.2015

(Renuka Muttoo)
Ombudsman