



VIDYUT OMBUDSMAN FOR THE STATE OF TELANGANA
First Floor 33/11 kV substation, Hyderabad Boats Club Lane
Lumbini Park, Hyderabad - 500 063

:: Present:: R. DAMODAR

Friday the Sixteenth Day of March 2018

Appeal No. 03 of 2018

Preferred against Order Dt.16.12.2017 of CGRF in
C.G.No.843/2017-18/Hyderabad South Circle

Between

M/s. State Bank of India, represented by the Chief Manager, Chandrayangutta,
Hyderabad. 500 005. Phone: 040-24345202.

... Appellant

AND

1. The ADE/OP/Falaknuma/TSSPDCL/Hyderabad.
2. The AAO/ERO/Salarjung/TSSPDCL/Hyderabad.
3. The DE/OP/Charminar/TSSPDCL/Hyderabad.
4. The SE/OP/Hyd.South Circle/TSSPDCL/Hyderabad.

... Respondents

The above appeal filed on 19.01.2018, coming up for final hearing before the Viduyut Ombudsman, Telangana State on 21.02.2018 at Hyderabad in the presence of Sri. Bora Sankara Rao - Asst. Manager on behalf of the Appellant Company and Sri. K. Shiva Kumar - ADE/OP/Falaknuma, MD. Anwar Pasha - DE/OP/Charminar and Smt. M. Padmavathi - JAO/ERO-III for the Respondents and having considered the record and submissions of both the parties, the Viduyut Ombudsman passed the following;

AWARD

The Appellant M/s. State Bank of India has its ATM with consumer SC No. X1015179. The Appellant is aggrieved because of the wrong bills issued for the months of August and October,2017 and filed a complaint dt.23.11.2017 seeking rectification and revision of the August and October,2017 CC bills.

2. The Respondent No.1 filed a reply dt. 12.12.2017 stating that the bills of the service connection were raised in June,July and August,2017 under the caption door lock status. Therefore he stated that the 3 months consumption was

adjusted when the meter reading was taken under status 01 and the same was clarified in September by issuing (-1404) units for (-)Rs 14,180/-.

3. The Respondent No.1 stated that there was a field visit on 11.12.2017 at 5.00 PM to the ATM premises after filing of the complaint. The meter was fixed in a small room from where there is no access to take reading (continuously kept under lock and key with the security guard, who helps at the time of reading by opening the room if available). He stated that the CC bills for the service connection were issued for the months of August, September and November,2017 under door lock(05) status. In the month of October,2017 the bill was issued under 01 status with -1404 units for (-)Rs 14,180/- which would automatically gets adjusted by the Spot Billing Machine (SBM) and therefore, he claimed that there is no excess bill and there is no need to revise the bill.

4. After going through the record and rival contentions, the CGRF noted that no excess bills have been issued and the bills have been issued as per the recorded consumption in the meter and therefore, there is no need to revise the bills and issued a direction to the Appellant to shift the meter outside the room to avoid the bills under door lock status and rejected the complaint through the impugned orders.

5. Aggrieved and not satisfied with the impugned order, the Appellant preferred the present Appeal alleging that the CC bills to the ATM room showed exorbitant charges since April,2017 against an average electricity bill of approximately Rs 5000/- and that even though the bills were being paid regularly, the necessary adjustments were not carried out and seeking arrangement to adjust the excess paid amount by the Appellant in the future CC bills.

6. The 1st Respondent filed a reply dt.20.02.2018 stating that he inspected the service on 11.12.2017 at 5.00 PM and found that the meter fixed in a small room was inaccessible and the room was kept under lock and key with the security guard, who would open the room for meter readers if he is available.

7. The 1st Respondent further stated that the CC bills were raised for the months of June,July and August,2017 under door lock status and therefore, the 3 months consumption was adjusted when the meter reading was taken under the

status 01 and it was clarified in September by issuing -1404 units for Rs (-14180/-). He stated that on physical inspection of the load and the data available on the meter, he found the consumption pattern as correct. He claimed that the consumption depends on various parameters such as:

1. Using the ISI standard equipment/material.
2. Regular maintenance of equipments
3. avoiding the leakage current in electric system.

8. The 1st Respondent further stated that if there is any suspicion of fault in the meter, it has to be checked in the MRT lab South Circle in the presence of the consumer by paying Rs 300/-. He stated that in case of finding any fault in the meter in the MRT lab, the bills will be revised by the Accounts Wing.

9. In view of the nature of contentions, the efforts at mediation have not succeeded and therefore, the matter is being disposed of on merits.

10. Based on the material on record, the following issues arise for determination:

1. Whether the CC bills issued for the service connection are exorbitant and unconnected with the consumption of the ATM machine of the Appellant?
2. Whether the impugned orders are liable to be set aside?

Arguments heard.

Issues 1 & 2

11. The Appellant M/s. State Bank of India pleaded for rectification of wrong bills issued for the months of August and October, 2017 for their Service Connection No. X1015179 of its ATM.

12. The ADE/OP/Falaknuma who inspected the premises on complaint reported that the meter was fixed in a small room, where there is no access to take reading (continuously kept under lock and key of the security guard, who helps at the time of reading by opening the room, if he is available).

13. The Electronic Billing System (EBS) shows the following consumption, billing, collection and arrears particulars for the SC No. X1015179:

Month/Year	ST	Closing Reading	Units (kwh)	Demand
Jan-18	01	52843	300	2948.00
Dec-17	01	52543	-1169	-11854.00
Nov-17	05	50873	2839	28337.00
Oct-17	01	50873	-1404	-14180.00
Sep-17	05	47991	2143	21334.00
Aug-17	05	47991	2143	21334.00
July-17	01	47991	2457	24544.00
June-17	05	43200	778	7602.00
May-17	05	43200	778	7602.00
Apr-17	05	43200	778	7602.00
Mar-17	01	43200	845	8317.00
Feb-17	01	42355	794	7780.00
Jan-17	01	41561	696	6877.00

From the above periodical readings, it is clear that for the months of April, May, June, August, September and November, 2017 the bills were issued under status '05' (Door lock). The EBS statement shows that prior to March, 2017 from the year 2013, i.e, for about 4 years, there was no instance of door lock status bills. Then why suddenly the premises has been billed under door lock status from November, 2017 is not explained clearly. The only reason for issuing the bills under the door lock status is stated to be the non availability of the security guard, who holds the key to the small room where the meter is installed.

14. At this stage the procedure prescribed to deal with similar situations in the GTCS has to be seen :

The Clause 7.4.2 of GTCS is reproduced here under:

If a consumer leaves his installation connected to the Company mains, but locks up the meter or otherwise makes it inaccessible for reading by the authorised person of the Company, he will be provisionally charged for this door lock billing period. For the first billing period (1 month or 2 months or 3 months as the case may be), the same consumption recorded during the previous period (1 month or 2 months or 3 months as the case may be). If, on the next meter reading date the meter is accessible for reading, the consumer will be charged for the actual consumption after adjusting the consumption provisionally charged for during the door lock billing period, subject to the monthly Minimum Charges as per tariff conditions. If, however, the meter remains inaccessible for reading even for the second billing period, the consumer will be served with a 24 hours notice to open his premises for reading of the meter at a fixed time and date. Consequent on such notice, if the meter is available for reading, the consumer will be charged for actual consumption after adjusting the consumption provisionally charged for during the first door lock billing period, subject to the monthly Minimum Charges as per tariff conditions.

15. Similar Clause 7.4.1 of GTCS is reproduced hereunder to note the procedure for taking the recording in the meter:

The persons/ officers authorised by the Company will take meter readings once in each month or such other interval of time as prescribed in the 'Electricity Supply Code' Regulation issued by the Commission. **Meter readers shall have access to the consumer's Premises at all reasonable times for the purpose of such reading.** The meter reader shall enter each meter reading in the Pass Book, provided by the Company to the consumer.

16. It is clear that Clause 7.4.1 of the GTCS mandates the consumer to provide access to the meter readers at all reasonable times for the purpose of

taking readings and Clause 7.4.2 of GTCS shows the procedure for the door lock periods. An average of 778 units have been billed monthly for the months of April, May and June,2017 under the door lock status '05' with reading 43200 in the present case. While in the month of July,2017 the bill was issued for the actual reading of 47991 with a consumed units of 2457 for 4 months and billed accordingly duly adjusting the previous months consumption during the door lock billing period. And again for the months of August and September,2017 the CC bills were issued under the door lock status '05' with an average monthly units as 2143 units with reading 47991. Subsequently, during the month of October,2017 the bill was issued with the actual reading of 50873 duly adjusting the previous months consumption. Similar procedure was adopted for the door lock billing month of November,2017. Hence there is no discrepancy in terms of billing of the service connection in the present case. The allegation of excess billing is clearly answered by the DISCOM with no extra burden on the Appellant.

17. It is the responsibility of the Appellant as per the terms of GTCS to provide accessibility for taking readings by the meter reader. With a view to stop the dispute from recurring, there shall be a direction to the Appellant to get the meter installed outside the room with the help of the Respondents so as to facilitate taking of meter reading by the staff of the DISCOM.

18. From the aforementioned material, it is clear that the excess bills allegation is answered properly. The DISCOM has been issuing CC bills and collecting the amounts from the consumer. The difference in the amounts in CC bills are only due to metering based on Door Lock Status (05) and Normal Status (01). It is also clear that the excess bills are being adjusted in the normal bills with no additional amounts. Therefore, the allegation of the Appellant that there is variation resulting in loss to the Appellant is found to be untenable. The issues are answered accordingly.

19. In the result, the Appeal is disposed of as follows:

- a. The CC bills issued to the Appellant are found to be correct and connected with the consumption pattern.

- b. The Appellant is directed to make arrangement for keeping the meter accessible to the meter readers in coordination with the Respondents expeditiously.
- c. The impugned orders are found to be correct and upheld.

20. The licensee shall comply with and implement this order within 15 days from the date of receipt of this order under clause 3.38 of the Regulation 3 of 2015 of TSERC.

TYPED BY Clerk Computer Operator, Corrected, Signed and Pronounced by me on this the 16th day of March, 2018.

Sd/-

Vidyut Ombudsman

1. M/s. State Bank of India, represented by the Chief Manager, Chandrayangutta, Hyderabad. 500 005. Phone: 040-24345202.
2. The ADE/OP/Falaknuma/TSSPDCL/Hyderabad.
3. The AAO/ERO/Salarjung/TSSPDCL/Hyderabad.
4. The DE/OP/Charminar/TSSPDCL/Hyderabad.
5. The SE/OP/Hyd.South Circle/TSSPDCL/Hyderabad.

Copy to :

6. The Chairperson, Consumer Grievance Redressal Forum, Greater Hyderabad Area, TSSPDCL, Vengal Rao Nagar, Erragadda, Hyderabad - 500 045.
7. The Secretary, TSERC, 5th Floor Singareni Bhavan, Red Hills, Lakdikapul, Hyd.