

Before the Ombudsman
KPFC BHAVAN, C.V.Raman Pillai Road , Vellayambalam,
Thiruvananthapuram-695 010.

Order Dated. 29th December 2006.

Present: M.Sivathanu Pillai, Ombudsman-in Charge.

Appeal petition No 7 of 2006.

CGRF order No.CGRF-CR/COMP.53/2006-07/215 DATED 20-10-2006.

Mrs.Renu R.Menon,

Pallavi,

Vadacode.P.O,

Thrikkakara North,Kochi 21.

Petitioner

Vs

Assistant Executive Engineer

Electrical Sub Division, KSEB,

Kalamasser,Kochi.

Respondent

Date of hearing: 29th December 2006.

Petitioner is a consumer with No. 55800945 under Thevakkal Section of Kalamassery Sub Division in Ernakulam District. Petitioner has stated as follows:

“Petitioner’s mother is the sole occupant of this house. The mechanical energy meter here was replaced with an electronic meter on 20th March 2006. The reading taken on 15th May 2006 is 335 units.(335-16) ie.319 units as consumption.

After this a lighting discharge that occurred on 19th May 2006 disrupted and disconnected the power supply to the house. Next day a lineman of Kerala State Electricity Board (hereinafter called Board) after inspection informed that all the three fuses were blown up but the energy meter was all right. He agreed to rectify the defect the next day and as a temporary measure adjusted a phase for emergency. But there was no follow-up action by the Department for the next five days and in the meanwhile electric appliances such as tube lights and fan were damaged. Petitioner stated that her mother was very upset and the issue was taken up with the Department very seriously with her mother having a rough talk with them over the phone on 25th May 2006. Next day ie., on 26th May the lineman attended the defective supply system and replaced the fuses and power supply was restored. Board staff went back, then returned on the same day and informed us that the meter has been replaced. The petitioner has stated that neither the energy meter nor its I.R were shown to them before installation.

Reading of this meter was taken on 15th July 2006 and bill issued on the same day. In the invoice the old meter reading is shown as 352-332 and the

meter reading as 4800-5 ie., 17+4795 units as consumption. The next reading from the same energy meter taken on 15th September 2006 is 5152-4800 ie. 352 units.

On receiving the first bill with excess amount the petitioner approached Thevakkal office on 15th July 2006. They installed a parallel meter on 18th July 2006. Petitioner stated that after 10 days they informed that both the meter readings tally and the petitioner have to pay the full amount.

Following this, the petitioner forwarded a complaint to the Consumer Grievance Redressal Forum. The chairperson conducted a hearing on 28th September 2006 and issued an order cum report which was collected by the petitioner via registered post on 24th October 2006.

Petitioner has stated that her parents have been staying in that house since construction in 1996 and her mother is the sole occupant of that house for the last 5 years since her father's demise in 2001. Petitioner stated that the payment of all bills except the one in question was always made promptly without any default. The finding of the CGRF that the abnormal high reading was caused due to insufficient earthing in the dining room and first floor lobby were based on the inspections conducted by the Assistant Engineer on the functionality of ELCB and MCBs on 10th October 2006 and subsequent visit and the report by the Forum dated 16th October 2006. Petitioner has stated that the meter reading was normal during that period and the respective bills are evident for that. Abnormally high reading has been recorded only once and that was after the meter replacement without their consent. “

The question is regarding the initial reading of the energy meter replaced on 26th May 2006.

The petition was heard on 29th December 2006. The respondent did not turn up for the hearing.

As per the documents presented in original by the petitioner the consumption prior to the replacement of the energy meter on 20th March 2006 and the consumption after July 2006, are almost the same. This reveals two facts. One is that the consumption was almost steady. Hence there is no reason to assume that the consumption for the period after replacement of the faulty meter on 26th May 2006 suddenly increased for a period of two months alone. Secondly if there was severe leakage in the wiring, then this would have been reflected in the consumption before replacement of the meter also at least to significant values.

The consumption of 4802 units during the period from 26-5-2006 to 22-07-2006(ie for 57 days) gives an average consumption of 84.2 units per day. This will be more than this figure if availability factor of supply is also taken in to consideration. Consumption of 84 units in 24 hours is equivalent to a load of 3.5 KW. CGRF order states that the MCBs tripped when phase and earth were shorted in all circuits except dining room and lobby circuits. This means that the earth conductivity was good. Hence it can be easily concluded that the load if present should be in the phase to earth connection. But a fault current from a

load of 3 KW cannot persist continuously for 57 days. The insulation would have burned completely within minutes. After the burnout of insulation if the conductor comes in to contact with earth, then the MCB will trip. Hence the conclusion that the consumption was due to unhealthy wiring is not correct. CGRF does not mention about availability of proof for the initial meter reading other than the one noted in the Section Office. It has not been stated whether any official has cross-checked the initial reading.

Hence it is concluded that the initial meter reading given as 5 is not correct. The bill raised by Board on the basis of this initial reading is not binding on the petitioner.

The petition is disposed off.

Sd/-
OMBUDSMAN

P 7/2006/.....Dated

Forwarded to

Mrs.Renu R.Menon,
Pallavi,
Vadacode.P.O,
Thrikkakara North, Kochi 21.

The Chief Engineer(Electrical)
Disrtibution(Central), KSEB,
Vytilla, Kochi.

Assistant Executive Engineer
Electrical Sub Division, KSEB,
Kalamassery, Kochi.

Secretary-in-Charge