

## STATE ELECTRICITY OMBUDSMAN

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### REPRESENTATION No: P 154/10

Appellant : The Divisional Engineer , BSNL,Vellayambalam,  
Keston Road, Thiruvananthapuram 3

Respondent: Kerala State Electricity Board

*Represented by*

The Assistant Executive Engineer  
Electrical SubDivision, Vellayambalam,  
Thiruvananthapuram

### ORDER

The Divisional Engineer , BSNL,Vellayambalam submitted a representation on 26.7.2010 seeking the following relief :

*Issue fresh bills for 1/2008, 9/2008, 10/2008 and 12/2008 based on 3 months average consumption after changing the meter*

Counter statements of the Respondent was obtained and hearing conducted on 20.10.2010.

The telephone exchange at Vazhayila Thiruvananthapuram has a 3 phase Electricity connection with 33 KW load and consumer number 17775. The BSNL officials have been making complaints about the malfunctioning of the three phase meter in their premises from May 2007 onwards. The readings recorded for May 2007 and June 2007 were found to be abnormal. So the KSEB issued invoice for the average consumption noting the meter as faulty (MF) .But subsequently the readings were found to be normal until Sept 2008. The meter began to show abnormal reading by the end of 2008. The BSNL officials were recording log sheets of daily readings.They allege that on certain days the reading were as a high as 2000 unit per day. They approached the higher officials of KSEB and got the meter replaced with a new meter on 21/01/2009.

The BSNL officials complain that the reading for the month of January 2008 Sept 2008 Oct 2008 and Dec 2008 were erroneous and the consumption recorded were abnormally high. They claim that on an average the daily consumption is between 250 to 300 units which means that the monthly consumption should be between 7500 to 9000 units. They also claim that the consumption recorded above this level were due to error in the meter. They also note that the consumption recorded in the new meter after Jan 2009 was correct

and reasonable. Hence they want the bill for January September October and December of 2008 to be revised.

The Respondent reported that the meter in dispute was tested in KSEB laboratory as well as in the Meter Testing and Standards Laboratory of the Electrical Inspector. The errors were found to be within limits. The respondent also noted that the variation in the monthly consumption could be due to variations in the date of taking the readings. But the date of takings the readings were not seen recorded in the meter reading register. The Respondent also noted that BSNL is keen in energy conservation measures recently and that could be one reason for recording lesser consumption now. Respondent also informed that the erroneous functioning of the meter during certain periods and correct functioning during other periods was not technically feasible. The meter was not changed as and when BSNL raised doubts about its erroneous functioning due to shortage of meters and due to the fact that the meter was recording properly in most of the months. It is also seen that the abnormal reading noted in May and June of 2007 was probably due to the errors committed by the staff. It may also be noted that the monthly consumption in the premises had exceeded the declared average of 250-300 units per day during at least 3 months after change of meter.

It is true that since the meter had been found to be working properly during the testing by Electrical Inspector in March 2010 the consumer is legally liable to pay current charges as per the readings recorded. But the abnormal and erroneous display of readings on certain days alleged by BSNL had been appropriately supported by the daily log books maintained in the Telephone Exchange and the readings recorded in the series meter installed by them. BSNL being a public sector concern, the documents produced by them cannot be written off as irrelevant or unreliable. The daily log book show that there are abnormal readings on certain days and abnormal increase in the monthly consumption during the corresponding months. On the other hand the abstract of meter reading register produced by the Respondent from March 2005 to July 2010 do not even show the actual dates of taking the readings. The Respondent reported that there was no 'practice' of recording *the date of readings* of consumers. If the actual date of reading had been recorded, some of the variations in certain months could be satisfactorily explained. The Respondent is directed to ensure that the date of reading is recorded at least in the case of consumers with heavy consumption hereafter.

In view of the facts and documents presented before me I feel that consumption recorded for certain months, especially during the end of 2008 needs to be revised. This is more relevant in view of the fact that the BSNL authorities had frantically approached the higher authorities during Dec 2008 complaining about the erratic behavior of the meter and the meter was changed on 21/01/2009.

The Appellant has pleaded to issue fresh bills for 1/2008, 9/2008, 10/2008 and 12/2008 based on 3 months average consumption after changing the meter. The consumption for 9/2008 and 10/2008 can not be termed as excessive in view of the claimed daily average of 250-300 units. To be fair to the complainant I conclude that the consumption recorded for the months of Jan 2008 (13950) and Oct 2008 (15200) shall be revised taking the average for the three months of Feb, March and April of 2009. ie, 9000 units per month.

Orders:

Under the circum stances explained above and after carefully examining all the evidences, arguments and points furnished by the Appellant and Respondent on the matter, the representation is disposed off with the following orders:

1. *The Respondent shall issue fresh bills for 1/2008 and 10/2008 based on the average consumption for 3 months after changing the meter, as directed above, and the excess payments shall be adjusted in the future bills.*
2. *No order on costs.*

Dated this the 21<sup>st</sup> day of October 2010,

P.PARAMESWARAN  
Electricity Ombudsman

No P 154 /2010/ 685 / dated 21.10.2010

Forwarded to: 1. The Divisional Engineer , BSNL,Vellayambalam,  
Keston Road, Thiruvananthapuram 3  
2. The Assistant Executive Engineer  
Electrical SubDivision, Vellayambalam,  
Thiruvananthapuram

Copy to :

1. The Secretary,  
Kerala State Electricity Regulatory Commission  
KPFC Bhavanam, Vellayambalam, Thiruvananthapuram 695010
2. The Secretary ,KSE Board,  
VaidyuthiBhavanam ,Thiruvananthapuram 695004
3. The Chairman , CGRF,KSE Board , Vaidyuthibhavanam, Kottarakkara

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