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Current News
மின் செய்திகள்

August, 2020

Assessing TANGEDCO's Compliance to Distribution Standards of Performance (DSOP): An Analysis of RTI Data for the Year 2016 (Part -3)

The previous issue explained about TANGEDCO's level of performance in carrying out its service in accordance with the Distribution Standards of Performance (DSOP) regulations. This section of the editorial explains the methodology and the various sections of the said regulations, analysed in detail.

Methodology: In order to understand how TANGEDCO was able to arrive at its achieved level of performance, this study attempted to "reverse engineer" the data presented by TANGEDCO. To do so, 148 Electricity Distribution Circles (EDCs) of TANGEDCO in both urban and rural areas in the following 4 regions viz., Chennai North, Chennai South, Coimbatore, Erode were chosen. Right to information (RTIs) applications were filed with the selected Distribution Circles seeking data on (i) New Supply (ii) Additional load (iii) Temporary Supply (iv) Shifting of Service and (v) Transfer of Service. To find the (i) Number of applications processed within the time schedule (ii) Number of applications processed beyond the time schedule (iii) Number of pending applications, with the reasons for delay (iv) Number of applications for which compensation has been paid (v) Aggregate amount of compensation.

Out of 148 EDCs 43 provided the information, 56 circles requested in-person meetings for getting information, while 49 circles did not provide the data. This study analyses the data provided by 43 Distribution circles in the following regions: a) Chennai North - Chennai North, Chennai Central and Chennai West; b) Chennai South - Chennai South and Chengelpattu; c) Coimbatore - Coimbatore South, Coimbatore Metro, Tiruppur and Udamalapet; d) Erode - Gobichettipalayam and Mettur.

The various standards of performance outlined by the regulations: TNERC DSOP, 2004, outlines the standards of performance for the licensees' services as given below.

1. **Duties of the licensees to supply and provide additional load on request:** Section 43 of Electricity Act, defines that the licensee (TANGEDCO) has to supply electricity to the consumers within one month (30 days) of receiving the application. The time schedules for different categories:

Category	Time Schedule for LT
No extension or improvement work	Within 30 days
Extension & improvement without distribution transformer	60 days
Extension & improvement with distribution transformer	90 days
Compensation for consumers in case of failure to meet the above standards: Rs.100/- per day of delay subject to maximum of Rs.1000/-	

(to be continued...)

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Please send your feedback to
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Internet of Things (IoT) (Part –3)

The role of data processing and user interface in the Internet of Things (IoT) were explained in the previous issue. This issue will focus on applications and disadvantages of IoT.

Applications of IoT

IoT is fast becoming the norm for most sectors. The main advantage is that it ensures an easier way of living for the user through simplification, automation and controlling different processes. Given below are some examples which explain the functions of IoT in different fields.

a) **Energy management** :

Electricity is an essential part of daily life. IoT helps in connecting the utility and consumers by bringing about transparency in the processes and giving real time data. A consumer must be aware of her/his electricity usage and should take necessary measures to conserve energy. IoT technology will help consumers monitor and control the usage of electricity. "Smart homes" devices enable the efficient monitoring and controlling of electrical appliances such as lighting, cooling, heating appliances with internet and communication technologies (smart phones, laptops and tablets).

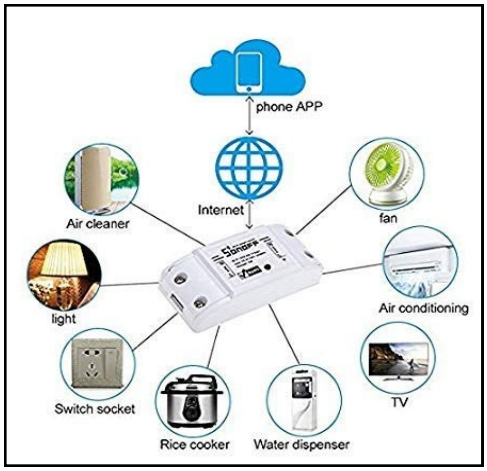

Image 1 : Sonoff Wireless switch;
Image Source : Sonoff

Image 1 represents that normal appliances connected with smart devices such as Sonoff Wireless switch can be converted into smart appliances. When it comes to recording electricity consumption, smart meters play a significant role. They enable bidirectional communication between the utility and consumer thereby strengthening the electricity department by making the billing process easier, reducing error (made by assessors), prevent theft of electricity, meter tampering and so on. Thus, it offers valuable information to the consumer about their consumption patterns and prepaid billing options. Also, the utility can measure the forecasting and management of peak demand, remote connection and disconnection of load. Image 2 represents the smart meter.

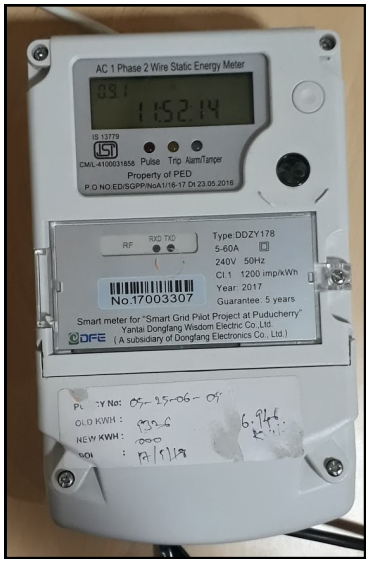

Image 2: Smart meter

Example: Electricity Supply Monitoring Initiative (ESMI), a program implemented by Prayas (Energy Group) in partnership with CAG, provides evidence-based feedback about the quality of electricity supply. The study by CAG shows the interruptions and voltage fluctuations at various locations in Tamil Nadu. Studies like these will help the utility strengthen their quality of electricity supply; the process will be further enhanced by IoT.

b) Agriculture:

In agriculture, pump controllers are used to monitor and operate the pump remotely with the help of a mobile network. These controllers can also be installed in existing pumps and the farmer can operate the pump from any mobile device. Image 3 represents the pump controller installed in the premises.

(to be continued...)

Tamil Nadu News

HC declares as illegal charges levied by Tangedco on high tension consumers

The Madras High Court on Friday declared as illegal the maximum-demand charges and the compensation charges for low power factor levied by the Tamil Nadu Generation and Distribution Corporation (Tangedco) on high tension consumers when the commercial establishments were shut due to the COVID-19 lockdown. Justice N. Anand Venkatesh held that it was unfair to demand such charges from HT consumers who were caught between the devil and the deep sea. “On one hand, the government has asked them to shut their establishments, and on the other, Tangedco is levying maximum-demand charges from them,” he said.

“If this is allowed to be continued, it will lead to the permanent shutting down of the industries. The financial crunch being faced by the industries due to the lockdown and the huge challenge they are going to face after the pandemic is now made worse by Tangedco levying maximum-demand charges,” the judge observed, while disposing of a huge batch of writ petitions filed by several high tension consumers. “Tangedco must understand that its attitude will kill the industries and the closing down of industries will ultimately have a financial implication on Tangedco as well. And Tangedco is virtually killing the goose that is laying the golden eggs,” the judge observed, while disposing of a huge batch of writ petitions filed by several high tension consumers.

The judge pointed out that as per the Tamil Nadu Electricity Regulation Commission (TNERC) regulations, Tangedco could levy demand charges on the actual KVA demand recorded in a month or 90% of the sanctioned demand, whichever was higher. Similarly, it was entitled to levy compensation charges, in the nature of penalty, if there was a lag in power factor beyond the stipulated limit. “It is illogical that Tangedco mechanically levied compensation for low power factor, even without understanding that the establishments were completely shut and that there was no way they could utilise the optimum PF. In any event... penalty cannot be imposed without affording an opportunity, since it involves civil consequences,” Justice Venkatesh added. “Therefore, Tangedco is not actually losing any revenue towards consumption of electricity,” the judge concluded.

Source: The Hindu, August 15, 2020

India News

India's power output rises for first time in five months in early August

India’s electricity generation in the first 15 days of August rose for the first time since early March, provisional government data showed, as the country opened up industries and lifted restrictions to control the spread of coronavirus. Power generation rose 2.6 per cent in the first 15 days of August compared wth the same period of last year, a Reuters analysis of daily load despatch data from federal grid operator POSOCO showed, compared with a 1.8 per cent fall in July.

In the second half of last month, electricity generation declined 3.1 per cent. Power use has picked up from previous months when India was under a strict lockdown, mainly because of higher demand in the northern states and rising consumption in the highly industrialized western states of Gujarat and Maharashtra. Industry and offices account for more than half of India’s annual power use. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has been citing electricity consumption to show there are “green shoots” in the economy. Rajasthan, India’s largest state by area, saw a 15.7 per cent growth in electricity use. Other states including Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh also saw an uptick in power demand. Renewable energy generation, which fell by nearly a fifth in July, rose 2.3 per cent in the first half of August. Solar-powered electricity production grew 19.3 per cent, while wind-powered generation fell over 10 per cent. Power generation from coal - India’s primary source of electricity - rose 4.2 per cent in the first fifteen days of August, the data showed.

Source: The Economic Times, August 18, 2020

Consumer Focus

The petitioner is a domestic consumer and her electricity meter reading was taken on 14.10.2016. Thereafter the utility did not take the meter readings for a year even after repeated requests. The officials informed the petitioner that she has been consuming less than 100 units. In Tamil Nadu, consumers using less than 100 units fall under the subsidised category. However, on 14.09.2017, the officials demanded that the petitioner pay two bills for the amounts of Rs. 519 and Rs. 2,480 respectively. This was imposed on the petitioner without giving any reasons. In the subsequent billing cycles on 13.10.2017, the assessor took the readings and charged Rs. 8,577, and then on 12.12.2017, the assessor entered the amount to be paid as Rs. 1,912 on the white meter card. The petitioner sent complaints to the Assessor, Assistant Engineer (AE), Assistant Executive Engineer (AEE), and Executive Engineer (EE). There was no response from the officials and they didn't accept the payment for the 12.12.2017 bill. Also they tormented and threatened the petitioner over the telephone and also in person to withdraw the complaints filed. So the petitioner appealed to Consumer Grievance Redressal Forum (CGRF). Since the petitioner had not attended the hearing, CGRF closed the petition. Following this, the petitioner appealed to the Electricity Ombudsman to refund the excess amount paid as a result of the utility officials' fault.

On hearing the arguments of both parties, it was found that : a) the assessor who collected the payment from the petitioner on 26.11.2016 had made wrong entries in the portal and the petitioner's electricity service connection was disconnected (DC) on 26.11.2016. However, b) on 14.09.2017, EB officials changed the information on the website as "Service Reconnected" and collected Rs. 519 as Reconnection Charges (RC Charges) and Rs. 2,480 as advance Current Consumption charges (CC charges). c) on 13.10.2017, when the assessor took the bimonthly reading, he took readings for the units consumed over the past one year (i.e., for 1751 units). As a result, Rs. 8,317 was charged excluding the advance CC charges from the total bill amount of Rs 10,797. d) In the subsequent billing cycle on 12.12.2017, Rs 1,912 was charged but the officials collected the payment after the due date with Belated Payment Surcharge Charge (BPSC) and RC Charges.

Given this situation, the Electricity Ombudsman applied TNERC Supply Code Clause 8 Meter Reading, Billing and intervals. Based on this, the Electricity Ombudsman ordered that it was unfair to collect charges for units consumed for the whole year at once and ordered the utility to divide the total consumed units in that year (between 14.10.2016 and 13.10.2017) into 6 equal units (i.e., 6 bi-monthly cycles). The excess amount paid by the petitioner has to be considered as an advance payment and adjusted in the subsequent cycles. The Ombudsman ordered the utility to submit a compliance report within 45 days from the date of receiving the order. Source: Ombudsman Case

ECC VOICE

திருச்சி மாவட்டம், தெற்கு அயித்தாம்பட்டி கிராமத்தில் வசிக்கும் திருமதி. கலா அவர்கள், மக்கள் நடமாட்டமும், குழந்தைகளும் அதிக அளவில் இருக்கும் தங்கள் தெருவில் உள்ள மின்கம்பங்களில், அவற்றின் சிமெண்ட் கான்கிரிட் உடைந்து கம்பிகள் வெளியே தெரிந்து மிகவும் பழுதடைந்த நிலையில் இருப்பதால், அக்கம்பங்களை மாற்றி தரும்படி லைன் மேனிடம் (Line man) பல முறை வேண்டுகோள் விடுத்துள்ளார். ஆனால் லைன் மேன், பிறகு பார்ப்பதாகவும், வேலை பளு அதிகமாகி விட்டதாகவும் கூறி அவர்களின் வேண்டுகோளை நிராகரித்து விட்டார்.

அப்பொழுது, திருச்சி மின் நுகர்வோர் மையத்தின், மின் நுகர்வோர் ஆலோசனை கூட்டம் நடைபெற்றது. அக்கூட்டதில் பங்கேற்று தங்களது பிரச்சனைகளை கூறி புகாராக அளித்தார். திருச்சி மின் நுகர்வோர் மையத்தின் மின் ஆலோசகர் திரு. செல்வம், லைன் மேனுக்கு கம்பங்களை மாற்றி தரும் அதிகாரம் இல்லை எனவும், எவ்வகை புகார்களாக இருப்பின் கடிதம் மூலம் விவரித்து பகுதி அலுவலகத்தில் உதவி பொறியாளரிடம் சமர்ப்பிக்க வேண்டும் என்றும் ஆலோசனை வழங்கினார். பின்பு அப்பகுதி மின்வாரியத்தின் உதவி பொறியாளரை தொலைபேசி மூலம் தொடர்பு கொண்டு, இப்புகாரினை விவரித்தார். பிறகு சம்மந்தப்பட்ட அதிகாரிகள் மின்கம்பங்களை பார்வையிட்டு மாற்றி தருவதாவும் அப்பகுதி மக்களிடம் உறுதி அளித்தனர். மேலும், 23 நாட்களில் புதிய மின்கம்பங்களை மாற்றி அமைத்தனர்.

நீண்ட காலமாக தொடர்ந்து வந்த பிரச்சனைக்கு தக்க நடவடிக்கை எடுத்து உதவிய திருச்சி மின் நுகர்வோர் மையத்திற்கும், மின் ஆலோசகர் திரு.செல்வம் அவர்களுக்கும் திருமதி. கலா மற்றும் அப்பகுதி பொதுமக்கள் தங்கள் நன்றியினை தெரிவித்தனர்.

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Initiative of

CAG
Citizen consumer and civic Action Group

Citizen consumer and civic Action Group (CAG) is a non-profit, non-political and professional organization that works towards protecting citizen's rights in consumer and environmental issues and promoting good governance processes including transparency, accountability and participatory decision making.

World News

Current News

China Sees Record-Breaking Electricity Consumption In August

China's electricity consumption hit a record this month after rising steadily since the start of summer, the People's Daily reported, noting that the trend suggested a robust recovery in economic activity in Asia's second-largest economy. Electricity consumption in the manufacturing sector has specifically posted a marked recovery since July, reversing a negative consumption trend from the first half of the year.

In even better news, electricity consumption in the consumer goods production sector rose by as much as 46.1 percent during the second quarter of the year, signaling expectations of more robust consumer spending—a vital indicator of an economy's health and conducive to higher energy demand. The data is the latest sign that China's economy is improving steadily after the lockdowns prompted by the pandemic, and ties in with data about oil imports, which have also been rising over the past few months.

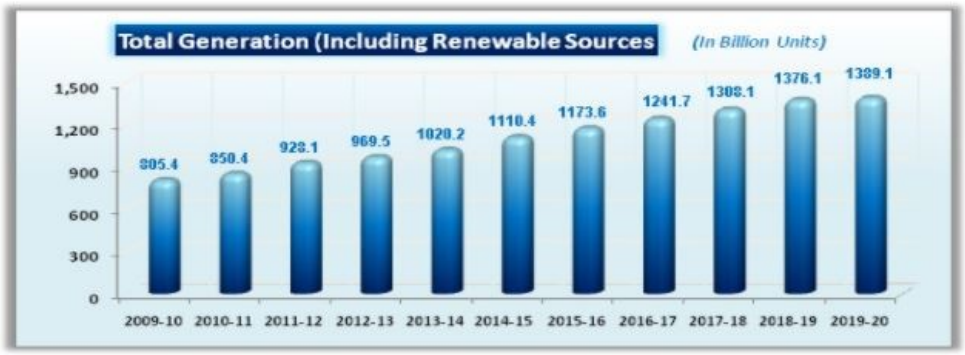
There has been, however, worry that the end of China's oil-buying spree is nearing after imports declined in July from June. Even with the slowdown, though, the July 2020 average was 25 percent higher than the average for July 2019. Positive economic news from China has been as crucial to oil prices' recovery as OPEC+'s production cuts, and it will only become more critical now that the group has eased its cuts by some 2 million barrels daily.

Source: Oilprice.com, August 28, 2020

Publications / Regulations

- Simplified procedure for shifting of existing agricultural service connection, TNERC, 2020
- Simplified procedure for registering agricultural applications, TNERC, 2020
- Measuring the Socio-economics of Transition: Focus on Jobs, IRENA, 2020
- Central Electricity Regulatory Commission (Terms and Conditions of Tariff) (First Amendment) Regulations, 2020, CERC

Total Generation during 2009-10 to 2019-20



Source: Ministry of Power, GoI