Volume I, Issue 1

Current News

மின் செய்திகள்

November, 2016

EDITORIAL

Indian electricity sector has seen significant changes over the last decade, initiated by the Electricity Act 2003. The Act allows anyone to set up power plants, while making transmission, a government company, and distribution being government or privately owned. The Act has also strengthened the State Electricity Regulatory Commissions (SERCs) which are empowered to set the tariff for various consumer categories. Pursuant to this, Tamil Nadu set up the Tamil Nadu Electricity Regulatory Commission (TNERC) while Tamil Nadu Generation and Distribution Company (TANGEDCO) and Tamil Nadu Transmission Corporation (TANTRANSCO) by breaking up Tamil Nadu Electricity Board (TNEB).

The Act also has enabling provisions for participation of consumers in the functioning of the electricity sector such as planning, policy, regulatory matters (price setting etc) and provides venues to redress grievances. However, it is seen from experience that electricity consumers do not have adequate knowledge of these institutions and processes. Further, lack of technical, policy, administrative and regulatory knowledge pose a serious challenge in enabling consumers to take advantage of the above to demand quality power supply.

As a result, there is a constant need to empower and educate electricity consumers about their rights. Education comprises of making them understand their rights to access and demand quality electricity services, provide quality inputs in the governance of the electricity sector while increasing consumer participation to push for transparent and accountability in its functioning.

Taking the above concerns into account, Citizen consumer and civic Action Group (CAG), which has been working in the electricity sector for the past two decades, is pleased to launch an initiative to build capacity of electricity consumers in Tamil Nadu. The overall objective of the work is to educate and empower CSOs to ensure electricity sector in Tamil Nadu is functioning in an accountable and transparent manner.

Towards this end, CAG has set up Electricity Consumer Cells (ECCs) in three districts of Tamil Nadu, viz. Tiruvallur, Cuddalore, and Tirunelveli. The ECCs, supported by an Electricity Advisor, will a) provide advisory services for consumers on various electricity issues that affect their day to day lives, b) promote an Electricity Consumer Network (ECN) of stakeholders and experts, and advocate for energy efficiency and renewable energy. The ECN will actively intervene to promote transparency and accountability, and contribute to improvement in electricity governance in Tamil Nadu, c) reach out to wider audience of stakeholders by demystifying and disseminating information related to electricity governance including administrative, policy, grievance redressal and regulatory areas, d) conduct outreach meetings to reach out to the consumers and Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), e) impart knowledge through training and capacity building programmes so as to promote knowledge base nodes in the local area of operation, f) engage in advocacy efforts to bring about transparency and accountability in electricity governance.

In line with the above, CAG is pleased to announce the launch of its inaugural bi-lingual monthly newsletter —English and Tamil—"***Current News***" (**மின் செய்திகள்**). The newsletter will focus on consumer oriented electricity issues with reference to Tamil Nadu. The newsletter will carry: a) "*Editorial*" on various consumer related topics, b) "*Tamil Nadu*" & "*India News*" items, c) highlight issues faced by the electricity consumers in their day to day lives under "*Consumer Focus*", d) *"ECC voice"* will look at specific topics in any of the Cells at the district level, e) *"World News"* focusing on electricity practices and issues across the world affecting consumers, f) *"Latest Regulations and Publications"*, g) *Energy statistics.*

We hope you will enjoy reading Current News and gain greater insights about the electricity sector. We look forward to your response to this initiative! Please send us your feedback to ecc@cag.org.in

Electricity Contacts

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- RTI—**TANGEDCO**
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Tamil Nadu News

ஆன்லைனில் மின் கட்டணம் செலுத்துவது எப்படி..??

ஆன்லைன் வந்த பின் நேரடி கட்டண மையங்களில் மக்கள் கூட்டம் குறைந்திருக்கின்றது என பெரும்பாலானோர் கூறி வந்தாலும், மக்கள் இன்னும் வரிசையில் நிற்கின்றனர் என்பதே உண்மை. இண்டர்நெட் இருக்கும் போது ஏன் வரிசையில் நின்று நேரத்தை வீணடிக்க வேண்டும். வீட்டில் இருந்த படியே ஆன்லைன் மூலம் மின் கட்டணங்களை செலுத்துவது எப்படி என்பதை தான் இங்கு தெரிந்து கொள்ள இருக்கின்றீர்கள்.

பதிவு

ஆன்லைன் மூலம் மின் கட்டணம் செலுத்த முதலில் தமிழக அரசின் அதிகாரப்பூர்வ இணையதளத்தில் பதிவு செய்ய வேண்டும். அதிகாரப்பூர்வ அரசு இணையதளம் செல்ல இங்கு க்ளிக் செய்யவும்.

சேவை

இணையதளத்தின் கீழ் பகுதியில் இருக்கும் புதிய வாடிக்கையாளர் பதிவு (New User Registration) பட்டனை க்ளிக் செய்யவும். இங்கு க்ளிக் செய்தவுடன் புதிய இணைய பக்கம் திறக்கும், அங்கு உங்களது பகுதியை தேர்வு செய்து வாடிக்கையாளர் அடையாள எண் குறிப்பிட வேண்டும். இந்த எண் முந்தைய மாதம் கட்டண ரசீதில் மி.இ.எண் பகுதியில் இருக்கும்.

மின்.இ.எண்

அடுத்து ரசீதில் இருக்கும் வாடிக்கையாளர் பதிவு எண் என்டர் செய்யலாம். பதிவு எண் என்டர் செய்த பின் கன்ஃபார்ம் என்ற பட்டனை க்ளிக் செய்ய வேண்டும். க்ளிக் செய்த பின் உங்களது கணக்கு துவங்கப்பட்டதை உறுதி செய்யும் மின்னஞ்சல் உங்களுக்கு அனுப்பப்படும். இந்த மின்னஞ்சலில் இருக்கும் லின்க்'ஐ க்ளிக் செய்து உங்களது யூஸர் ஐடியை உறுதி செய்ய வேண்டும்.

லாக் இன்

அடுத்து மீண்டும் லாக் இன் பக்கத்திற்கு சென்று லாக் இன் செய்ய வேண்டும். லாக் இன் செய்த பின் புகைப்படத்தில் குறிப்பிடப்பட்டிருப்பதை போன்றே இணைய பக்கத்தில் க்ளிக் செய்ய வேண்டும். இப்பகுதியில் க்ளிக் செய்தவுடன் கட்டணம் செலுத்தும் பக்கம் திறக்கும். இப்பக்கத்தில் டெபிட் கார்டு, க்ரெடிட் கார்டு, இண்டர்நெட் பேங்கிங் என உங்களுக்கு தேவையான ஆப்ஷனை தேர்வு செய்து கட்டணம் செலுத்த முடியும்.

Tamil Gizbot, Accessed, December 2016

India News

India's energy efficiency market at Rs 1.6 lakh crore: World Bank

The World Bank has pegged India's energy efficiency market at Rs 1.6 lakh crore, four times the Rs 44,000 crore in 2010 against the backdrop of the success of the government's UJALA scheme to distribute LED bulbs.

"The success of UJALA has reinforced stakeholder confidence in the promise of DSM (demand side management) and re-established the utility DSM market potential from Rs 44,000 crore estimated in 2010 to Rs 1.6 lakh crore by considering the end use energy opportunities alone," says the World Bank in its report. According to the study, the renewed DSM market potential is envisaged to deliver 178 billion units of electrical energy savings per annum that roughly translates into 18-20 per cent of the current levels of all India annual electricity consumption and 150 million tonnes of annual CO2 emissions reduction potential. The World Bank has placed Andhra Pradesh, Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Karnataka and Kerala as top five states in terms of overall energy efficiency implementation readiness. The report titled 'India's State Level Energy Efficiency Implementation Readiness' also reveals critical deficits or barriers in this respect. It suggests adoption of achievable energy savings targets against the identified energy efficiency interventions and set a time-frame to pursue these targets.

The study calls upon the states to endeavor to bring sector-specific energy efficiency policies with definite goals and time-bound action plans. This can be reinforced by introducing necessary legislation. It also made a case for notifying the urban local bodies (ULBs) to take energy efficiency measures such as undertaking investment grade energy audits, replacing old inefficient pumps with star-labeled pump sets in their water supply networks, installing energy-efficient street lighting options like LED street lights.

Retail price of 9 watt LED bulbs under the government's UJALA programme has dropped to as low as Rs 65 per unit to encourage consumers to opt for these energy efficient lights. "The aggregation of demand and bulk procurement has resulted in reduction of 88 per cent in procurement prices of LED bulbs from Rs 310 per piece (in February 2015) to Rs 38 (in August 2016), which is passed on to consumers". Retail price of LED bulbs reduced to Rs 65 from Rs 550 during the same period. State-run Energy Efficiency Services Ltd (EESL), the nodal agency for implementation of the UJALA scheme, aggregates the demand across country and procures LED bulbs in large quantity for distribution to consumers through state distribution companies or utilities. The annual saving in electricity bills will be Rs 40,000 crore, considering an average tariff of Rs 4 per kwh.

The government wants to replace all the 77 crore incandescent bulbs sold in India with LED bulbs under this scheme. This will result in reduction of 20,000 mw load, energy savings of 105 billion kwh and Green House Gas (GHG) emissions savings of 80 million tonnes every year. Each LED bulb helps a consumer save anywhere between Rs 160 to Rs 400 every year and has a life expectancy of 25,000 hours, thus making the cost recovery less than a year. For availing of the scheme, a customer needs to provide a copy of the latest electricity bill, along with a copy of ID proof, to discoms. The LED bulbs are also made available through other channels by EESL. (Sources The Economic Times 03, November, The Indian Express, 28th November, 2016)

Consumer Focus

This section will focus on Consumer Grievance Redressal Forum (CGRF) case orders. CGRF is grievance redressal mechanism set up within TANGEDCO as per directions of TNERC in 2004 under section 42 of the Electricity Act,2003. Consumers, who have grievances regarding new service connection, delay in effecting new service connection, change of defective meters, dispute in electricity consumption billing, non-attending to faults etc. can approach the CGRF located in each circle. As per CGRF Regulations 2004, it consists of three members 1) Superintending Engineer of the concerned circle, 2) Civil Society Organisation, 3) Financial and legal person nominated by District Collector.

BRIEF: This case is about misrepresentation of units of electricity consumed by the appellant resulting in undercharging for the usage of the service. A retrospective effect was implemented which was later struck down in the judgment and a refund was ordered.

FACTS: The appellant is a resident of Ayanavaram, Chennai. His electricity meter was defective and misrepresented the units consumed. In September 2015, the meter read 1220 units whereas in July 2015, it read 140 units. The appellant filed a complaint and requested for replacement of the meter. It was accompanied by the demand for the refund/adjustment of the misappropriated payment of the bill.

The respondents claimed that during summer the consumption is relatively high which is around 500-600 units per month and the consumption in winter is relatively low around 300-350 units. Surprisingly in March 2015, the meter read 180 units. The meter read 520 in May and 140 in July. As the appellant was charged this low, the meter was set accordingly to give a retrospective effect to the underpayment. On 27/01/2016 the meters were replaced by the respondent with respect to the abnormalities observed in the previous year.

CONTESTATION:

Appellant: 1) The retrospective effect given to the bill payment was disproportionate. 2) Excess amount paid by the appellant should be refunded.

Respondent: The retrospective effect given by the board was justified.

JUDGEMENT: The judge held that giving a retrospective effect for the underpayments is not acceptable. It is the fault of the respondent for defect and the appellant should not be punished for this. The respondent had already replaced the meter so it was held that an average consumption data should be taken for the period where the consumer had underpaid and the difference amount should be adjusted or refunded to the consumer.

ECC Voice

Electrocution

Electrocution is caused by the electric shock or electric current passing through the body, resulting in death or injury. Tamil Nadu has been witnessing growing number of electrocution cases with the National Crime Record Bureau Statistics report on *"Accidental Deaths and Suicides in India"* revealed that 468 people had died in Tamil Nadu due to electrocution in 2014

PREVENTION: Electrocution deaths can be reduced by replacing the Overhead (OH) cables with Underground (UG) cables and Aerial Bundled Conductors (ABC) e.g, most of the areas in Chennai have UG cables while suburbs have OH cables.

STATUS: Concerned over the growing number of electrocution cases, CAG had written a letter to TNERC on 26th May 2016, requesting to look into this serious issue and to speed up the implementation of the ABCs and UG cables in areas so as to avoid unnecessary life threatening accidents. It has also pointed out to directions given by Tamil Nadu Electricity Regulatory Commission (TNERC) to TANGEDCO to replace OH cables to UG cables or Aerial Bundled Conductors to avoid electrocution. TNERC has acknowledged the receipt of the letter and has assured that TANGEDCO will replace such OH cables with safer options in a phased manner.

LEGAL STATUS: **Section 53 of the Electricity Act 2003** specifies provisions relating to safety and electricity supply: State electricity regulator (Authority) in consultation with the State Government will specify suitable measures for protecting the public from dangers arising from the generation, transmission, distribution or by any electrical sources and eliminating or reducing the risks of personal injury to any person. The section also allows for inspection of maps and plans by Electrical Inspector. It also specifies action to be taken by the authorities for eliminating or reducing the risk of personal injury.

Section 161 of the Electricity Act 2003: If any accident occurs in connection with the generation, transmission, distribution, which has resulted in any injury or loss of human or animal life, can give notice to the Electrical Inspector within a specified time and direct the inspectorate to take appropriate measures.

Measures relating to Safety and Electricity Supply Regulations 2010 (Central Electricity Authority (CEA)) states that electric supply lines and apparatus shall be of sufficient rating for power with proper insulation following the relevant code of practice of the Bureau of Indian Standards or National Electrical Code. It should be maintained in such a manner as to ensure safety of human beings and animals. The Regulations give detailed guidelines for danger notices, setting up of street boxes, protection for workmen, display of instructions for resuscitation of persons suffering from electricity shock, periodic inspection, testing of consumer installation, appeal to Electrical Inspector in case of defect etc.

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

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World News

Current News

Importance of "Energy Citizens"

A new study conducted by CE Delft finds that practically all households in the EU can play a role in energy transition. The study focuses on what citizens can do with wind, solar, and demand management (including storage) by 2030 and 2050 – at home, in community groups, in the public sector, and in small businesses. The main finding is that 83 percent of European households could eventually become "energy citizens". Nearly two thirds of them, so roughly half of all households, could make their own energy. In this scenario, the EU would be 100% renewable for all of its energy – not just electricity.

For community wind and solar, the study is based on average coop sizes in France and the Netherlands. Household investment potential plays a role, as does local resource availability. For solar, residential roofs also play a role. Note for wind that the study assumes citizen co-ownership of large wind turbines, not small wind generators – because the latter don't work. The study assumes that the number of cars will stay the same by 2050 (probably unrealistic if we get self-driving vehicles and car ownership plummets), giving us 115 million households with an Electric Vehicles (just over half of 210 million). While the press croons over battery storage, smart electric boilers turn out to have greater potential for dissemination. While 42 million households (20 percent) might have stationary batteries, 70 million might have smart water boilers even more than the 60 million expected to have solar on their roofs. Stated in terms of the energy amount EVs clearly have the greatest storage potential by 2050, and the role of stationary batteries becomes much bigger than that of electric boilers. The situation may, however, be different in southern Europe, where more solar is available and less heat in needed than in Germany.

Energy citizens can play a central role, not a marginal one, in our energy supply. We are talking about roughly half of our electricity alone, with the other half left up to all of the utilities – municipal and corporate – that today cover nearly 100% of power supply in most countries. The EU now says it aims to focus on the "active participation of citizens and local communities in the supply and demand of electricity". The report certainly suggests that the potential is great. One wonders, though, whether officials in Brussels will have the stamina to stick with community energy once it becomes clear that the big energy firms that have pushed the concept of an integrated European market (and opposed renewables) would be sidelined in the process. Source: Energy Transition, November 9, 2016

Publications/Regulations

- TNERC, Do's and Dont's Consumer Grievance Redressal Forum Click here
- Eurelectric, Prosumers—an integral part of the power system and the market, June 2015, Click here

Statistics/Infographics

Jobs in Renewable Energy 2016, REN 21