Volume V, Issue 10

Current News
மின் செய்திகள்

October, 2020

Assessing TANGEDCO's Compliance to Distribution Standards of Performance (DSOP): An Analysis of RTI Data for the Year 2016 (Part -5)

The previous issue explained various sections of the said TNERC DSOP regulations in detail. This section of the editorial explains the findings of the analysis.

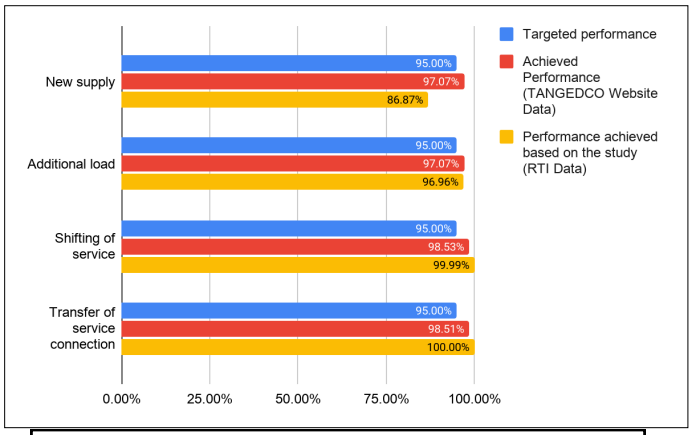
Findings of the study

This study analyses the level of performance achieved by TANGEDCO based on data collected via RTI responses from 43 Electricity Distribution Circles (EDCs) from 4 regions of TANGEDCO such as Chennai North, Chennai South, Coimbatore, and Erode. Findings suggest that there is a significant variance between TANGEDCO's level of performance vis a vis its targeted level of performance and the data published on its website. It further highlights that consumers/applicants were not compensated in instances where the standards of performance were not upheld. This reflects a strong need to improve transparency, ensure validity of data published around TANGEDCO's service delivery and further enhance compliance with the regulations around distribution standards of performance.

TANGEDCOs level of performance

In 2016, TANGEDCO published that it has achieved the targeted performance, as highlighted in Section 23 - Level of Performance, TNERC DSOP regulations, across 4 key service areas including providing new supply, additional load, shifting service and transferring service connection. On the other hand, data compiled via RTI responses suggest that TANGEDCO has not accomplished its targeted performance in providing new service connection, and additional loads.

The figure 1 presents TANGEDCO's (i) targeted performance, (ii) level of performance as published in its website and (iii) actual performance achieved (based on RTI data), across 4 of the distribution licensee's service areas.



(Figure 1: TANGEDCO's Level of Performance)

(to be continued...)

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

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Internet of Things (IoT) (Part – 5)

The application of the Internet of Things (IoT) as related to transport, healthcare and water management were discussed in the previous issue. This issue will explain the application of IoT in hospitality

f) Hospitality - In any business, it is important to provide ease of services to satisfy customer needs, so as to attract the customer and to maintain the company's reputation. Therefore innovation and technology play a vital role. Hospitality industry is no exception. For example, most of the hotels depend upon physical keys or key cards to unlock the rooms. This makes a guest wait for their check-in process. However, IoT based technology will send digital keys directly to the guests' mobile numbers before their check-in time, and it will sync the door up with the check-in desk. This allows the guest to bypass the check-in desk entirely and go straight to their room.

Image 1: Digital key; Image Source - Hilton Honors

Disadvantages

Some of the challenges faced in IoT include :

a) Compatibility: As IoT is growing rapidly with many different technologies competing to become the standard, there is a need for deployment of extra hardware or software to interact and connect with the devices. Considering this, some of the technologies may not be useful in upcoming years. The device architecture, protocols used, different operating systems are all variables in each device that often do not fit together seamlessly, and need expensive additional hardware and software to communicate with each other. Thus, compatibility is one of the disadvantages of IoT.

B) Data breach and privacy issues: As data collected is connected to the internet and stored in the cloud, there is a risk of hacking. A research from Gartner claims that by 2020, 25% of cyber attacks will target IoT devices through:

i) Malware infiltration: 24%; According to Bullguard, "Malware" is short for "malicious software" - computer programs designed to infiltrate and damage computers without the users consent. "Malware" is the general term covering all the different types of threats to your computer safety such as viruses, spyware, worms, trojans, rootkits and so on.

ii) Phishing attacks: 24%; Phishing is a cyber attack in which criminals use email as a weapon and send out emails requesting personal and financial details from people

iii) Social engineering attacks: 18%; Kaspersky defined Social engineering as manipulation technique that exploits human error to gain private information, access, or valuables

iv) Device misconfiguration issues: 11%; If a component is susceptible to attack due to an insecure configuration (according to O'reilly, insecure configuration is where a configuration is just plain wrong, either from the start or after changes were made that compromise the security of the application or system), this can be classified as a security misconfiguration.

v) Privilege escalation: 9%; Privilege escalation is a common way for attackers to gain unauthorised access to systems

vi) Credential theft: 6%; As described by Awake Security, Credential theft is a cybercrime involving the unlawful attainment of an organisation's or individual's password(s) with the intent to access and abuse/exfiltrate critical data and information.

It is important that both consumers and companies take necessary measures to improve security. Studies from Trustlook confirm that 54% of IoT device owners do not use any third party security tool and 35% out of these do not even change default passwords on their devices.

(to be continued...)

Tamil Nadu News

TNERC clarifies on tariff for consulting rooms

Domestic rates for those attached to houses and under 200 sq ft : Consulting rooms ulnder 200 sq.ft. of professionals such as lawyers, doctors, and chartered accountants, which are attached to their residences, will attract power tariff under domestic category and if they exceed 200 sq.ft. will attract commercial tariff, the Tamil Nadu Electricity Regulatory Commission (TNERC) has clarified.

Similarly, for consulting rooms away from residences, the commercial tariff would be applied, it said.

HC directive : The clarification is based on a directive from the Madurai bench of Madras High Court. The court had told the electricity officials to approach the TNERC for clarification in a case filed by Tiruchi-based lawyer Syed Tajudeen Madan.

Mr. Madan had taken the first floor of the residential premises for rent to run his office and electricity charges were demanded under commercial tariff from the premises.

Tangedco's query : Tamil Nadu Generation and Distribution Corporation Ltd. Chairman and Managing Director had sought clarification from TNERC, based on the directive.

The State electricity regulator said the consultation rooms attached to the residence and those not attached to the residence of professionals were classified differently.

There could be two classifications namely consulting rooms attached to the residence of the professionals and consulting rooms which were away from the residence of the professional, it added.

Non-domestic use : In case of consulting rooms attached to the residence, the substantial use of electricity would be for domestic use and in case of consulting rooms not attached to the residence of professionals' power was used for non-domestic purposes, it said.

Source: The Hindu, September 28, 2020

India News

Uttar Pradesh's Rs 4,800-crore solar project gets Central government's nod

MNRE has asked the Bundelkhand Saur Urja, the solar power park developer (SPPD), to submit the detailed project report at the earliest. The ministry of new and renewable energy (MNRE) has granted in-principal approval for the setting up of a 1200-MW ultra mega solar project in Jalaun district of Uttar Pradesh with an investment of Rs 4,800 crore.

The project, which will come up in Bundelkhand region, will be set up by Bundelkhand Saur Urja (BSUL), a joint venture company between Uttar Pradesh Non-Conventional Energy Development Agency (UPNEDA) and National Hydro Power Corporation (NHPC).

While UPNEDA will have 26% equity in the project, THDCIL's share would be 74%. MNRE has asked the Bundelkhand Saur Urja, the solar power park developer (SPPD), to submit the detailed project report at the earliest. Speaking to FE, Bhawani Singh Khangarot, director, UPNEDA, said BSUL has already identified 6000 acres of private land in Jalaun for the project.

"Land will be taken on lease basis from the farmers for 27 years and they will be a paid a rent of approximately `15,000-20,000 per acre per year," he said, adding that BSUL would put the entire infrastructure in place, including construction of roads and setting up evacuation lines before it invites bids from private players to set up plants in the park. Apart from this project, UPNEDA also has a joint venture with Tehri Hydro Development Corporation of India (THDCIL), named TUSCO, for the development of two 600 MW solar parks, one each in Jhansi and Lalitpur districts. UPNEDA has a 26% share in that JV too. "Work on that is also going on. Land identification has been done and the topographical survey for ascertaining the technical feasibility is going on" said Khangarot.

Source: Financial Express, October 1, 2020

Consumer Focus

The petitioner is a domestic consumer who availed a temporary service connection on 15.12.2017 for constructing his house. Upon completion of construction work, the petitioner approached the section office and applied for change of tariff from Tariff VI to Tariff IA on 06.02.2019. The petitioner received a letter from the TANGEDCO officials dated 07.02.2019, which stated that the construction work was not completed during the site visit. Based on this, the petitioner again visited the section office with a written letter stating that the officials did not visit the house and the house has enough lighting, and ventilation along with safety aspects and was habitable. Further he added that he had constructed the house under severe financial constraints and could not spend more money for the house again. He demanded a specific answer from the officials and wanted the Assistant Engineer to visit the house and examine in what way the house did not adhere to safety aspects and required further construction work.

Based on this, the Section Engineer visited the house on 11.02.2019 and found that the construction work was under progress. Also there were no signs of habitation and the kitchen was not functional. As a result, the application was rejected and the same was informed to the petitioner through a written letter by the Assistant Engineer on the same day. The petitioner registered a complaint with the Consumer Grievance Redressal Forum (CGRF) on 21.03.2019 for not changing the tariff slab and demanding refund of the amount paid in excess during the course of time, along with compensation. Subsequently, the Foreman from TANGEDCO visited the petitioner on 03.04.2019 and asked him to give a written declaration letter stating that he would change the tariff in future if the construction work was carried out. Based on Foreman's information, the petitioner visited the section office on 09.04.2019 and requested the officials for the legal rule/ order/ circular that mandated submission of the said declaration letter. Since the AE was not at the section office during that time, the petitioner gave a written request for details, to the Foreman. The Foreman did not accept the letter and therefore, the petitioner sent the same through post.

Later, the petitioner had a telephonic conversation with the AE on 10.04.2019. The AE undertook a site visit and changed the tariff from Tariff VI to Tariff IA on the same day. The CGRF had sent intimation to the petitioner on 18.05.2019 about the hearing on 21.05.2019. Since the petitioner did not turn up, the CGRF decided the case ex-party by dismissing it stating that the tariff was changed on time. However, the petitioner had not received the intimation about the hearing and he had sent a reminder to CGRF on 23.05.2019. Later, when he received the CGRF order dated 28.05.2019, the petitioner was aggrieved by it. He preferred an appeal before the Electricity Ombudsman. On hearing the arguments by both the parties, the Electricity Ombudsman stated that TANGEDCO officials failed to address the queries raised by the petitioner. Further he added there was no record on who inspected the house on 06.02.2019 and also the officials did not mention which part of construction work was carried out between 06.02.2019 and 10.04.2019. Given this situation, the Ombudsman ordered the utility to calculate the units consumed between 11.02.2019 and 10.04.2019 on the domestic tariff category and refund the excess amount paid by the petitioner. According to Tamil Nadu Electricity Distribution Standards of Performance Regulations, *clause 21 Compensation*, Ombudsman ordered the utility to pay compensation of Rs. 1000 for the delay in change of tariff beyond 30 days and to submit a compliance report within 45 days from the date of receiving the order. Source: Ombudsman Case

ECC VOICE

திருவள்ளூர் மாவட்டம், ஆவடி பகுதியில் வசிக்கும் திரு. சங்கரன் என்பவர், தங்கள் பகுதியில் துருபிடித்து, பழுதடைந்த நிலையில் இருந்து வந்த தெரு விளக்கு மின் கம்பி ஒன்று மதிய வேளையில் உடைந்து, வீட்டிற்கு வரும் LT வயர்கள் மீது விழுந்துள்ளதை கவனித்துள்ளார். ஆனால் அதன் காரணமாக மின்சாரம் துண்டிக்கப்படவில்லை. இருப்பினும் விபத்து நேர்ந்து விடுமோ என்ற அச்சத்தில் அவர், திருவள்ளூர் மின் நுகர்வோர் மையத்தின் ஒருங்கிணைப்பாளர் திரு. தன்ராஜ் அவர்களை தொடர்பு கொண்டு இந்தப் பிரச்சனையை கூறி புகார் அளித்தார். திருவள்ளூர் மின் நுகர்வோர் மையத்தின் மின் ஆலோசகர் திரு. அசோகன் அவர்கள் அப்பகுதியின் மின்வாரிய உதவி பொறியாளரை தொலைபேசி மூலம் தொடர்பு கொண்டு, இப்புகாரினை விவரித்தார். புகாரின் முக்கியத்துவத்தை எடுத்துக் கூறி விரைவில் சரி செய்து கொடுக்குமாறு வேண்டியுள்ளார். அதன்பிறகு சம்பந்தப்பட்ட அதிகாரிகள் அந்தப் பகுதியை பார்வையிட்டு, மின்கம்பத்தை மாற்றி தருவதாக அப்பகுதி மக்களிடம் உறுதி அளித்தனர். பின்பு, அவர்கள் கூறியவாறு அன்றே புதிய மின்கம்பத்தை மாற்றி அமைத்துக் கொடுத்தனர். குறுகிய காலத்தில் தக்க நடவடிக்கை எடுத்து உதவிய திருவள்ளூர் மின் நுகர்வோர் மையத்திற்கும், மின் ஆலோசகர் திரு.அசோகன் அவர்களுக்கும் திரு சங்கரன் தனது நன்றியினை தெரிவித்தார்.

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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

Australia plans to fast track renewable export project

The Australian government plans to accelerate the planning procedures for a proposed 15,000MW wind and solar project, which plans to produce hydrogen and ammonia for export to the Asia-Pacific region. The project in the Pilbara region of Western Australia is targeted to expand to 26,000MW, making it the largest of its kind in the world. The proposed Asian Renewable Energy Hub (AREH) was granted major project status by Canberra, which is keen to support the development of a hydrogen export industry. "Not only will the plant be able to export at scale, it will also be able to supply industries in the region while creating new job opportunities and economic growth," Australian industry minister Karen Andrews said.

AREH will also supply 3,000MW of power generated from the project to the domestic mining sector, which is expected to be the iron ore miners in the Pilbara, many of whom have pledged to lower emissions. The move by Canberra follows the Western Australia state government's approval of the project last week. The 15,000MW project is the first stage of the proposed AREH, with a further expansion to 26,000MW of hybrid wind and solar to power electrolysers for the production of green hydrogen and green ammonia at export scale, AREH project director Brendan Hammond said.

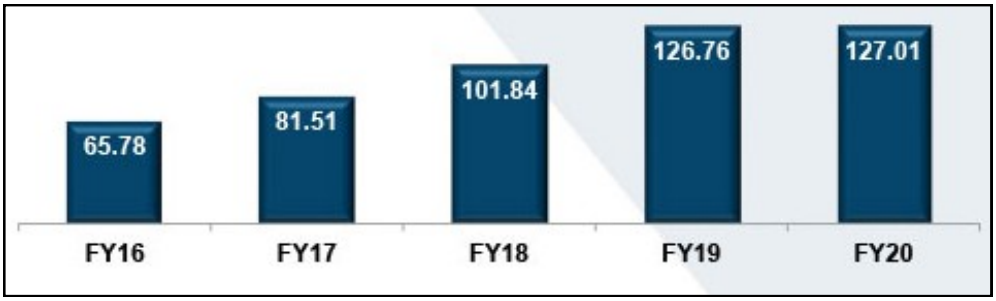
The AREH consortium includes Danish wind turbine manufacturer Vestas, Australian private-sector energy firm CWP Renewables and Hong Kong-based energy firm InterContinental Energy. The AREH project partners plan to make a final investment decision (FID) on the venture by 2025 and intends to sign supply agreements with consumers before the FID, he said. The project originally planned to construct a cable to export electricity generated from the wind and solar plants to Indonesia, but it is now focused on exporting green hydrogen and ammonia.

Source: Argusmedia, September 15, 2020

Publications / Regulations

- Comprehensive Tariff Order for Bagasse based Co-generation plants, TNERC, 2020
- Rise of renewables in cities - Energy solutions for the urban future, IRENA, 2020
- Electricity Access in India Benchmarking Distribution Utilities, NITI Aayog, 2020

Electricity generation from renewable energy sources in India (in billion units)



Source: ibef.org