

Energy Conservation Act (Part-5)

The [Energy Conservation Act, 2001](#) (from here on called the Act) formulated policies/programmes for energy conservation and efficiency in the nation. In this series we have been discussing the schemes passed under this Act and their many benefits for the electricity consumer. In the [previous issue](#) we examined flagship schemes launched by the Indo-Swiss [Building Energy Efficiency Project \(BEEP\)](#) and introduced the [Energy Efficiency Services Limited \(EESL\)](#).

This editorial will discuss some of the schemes implemented by EESL:

A. Smart Meter National Programme (SMNP): A [smart meter](#) is a digital device that can accurately measure electricity consumption and update automatically through a web-based system. Through this program, EESL seeks to replace conventional analogue meters that are prone to errors and readings can only be taken down manually. Smart meters will help by: a) Reducing commercial losses of utilities b) Enhancing revenues c) Serving as an important tool in power sector reforms, by providing accurate data consumption. EESL has [procured around 1.5 crore smart meters and installed over 13 lakh meters](#) under this scheme.

B. Cooling systems: The energy demand for cooling buildings is predicted to [triple by the year 2050](#). Using fans and air conditioners accounts for at least [10% of the total global electricity consumption](#), according to a study conducted in 2018. In order to support energy savings in this sector, EESL has launched the following initiatives:

i. [Retrofit of Air-conditioning to improve Indoor Air Quality for Safety and Efficiency \(RAISE\)](#): This program, aimed at commercial buildings, was launched in [July, 2020](#). It aims to enhance indoor air quality, thermal comfort, and energy efficiency in pre-existing air-conditioning systems. This is achieved by upgrading/modifying old systems in an affordable manner. EESL conducted a series of pilots, starting with the EESL office's air conditioning system. With almost no inconvenience in implementation, there was around [80% improvement in air quality](#). These results are being used to scale up the RAISE initiative nationwide by standardising retrofits throughout the country.

ii. [Super-Efficient AC Program \(ESEAP\)](#): This is a major step taken to incorporate energy efficiency in our cooling systems. EESL distributes Super-Efficient ACs which are [40% more efficient](#) than other lower star-rated products at similar prices. This program has made inexpensive, sustainable, and highly efficient cooling accessible to all. Consumers can [buy this Air Conditioner](#) on [eeslsmart.in](#); EESL's official online store for energy efficient products. The online store also carries other affordable energy efficient appliances like LED bulbs and [Brushless Direct Current \(BLDC\) fans](#).

(To be continued)

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

<i>Editorial</i>	1,2
<i>Tamil Nadu News</i>	3
<i>India News</i>	3
<i>Consumer Focus</i>	4
<i>World News</i>	5
<i>Publications</i>	5
<i>Statistics</i>	5

Please send your feedback to ecc@cag.org.in

Electricity Consumer Cells (ECCs)

ECC Tiruvallur

No. 118, Fourth Street, Kamaraj Nagar, Avadi, Tiruvallur District. Chennai - 600 071, Phone: 9382828286 Email: ecctiruvallur@gmail.com

ECC Tirunelveli

No.17/1, Shenbagavana Street, Palayamkottai, Tirunelveli - 627 006 Phone: 9443555097 Email: ecctirunelveli@gmail.com

ECC Cuddalore

No.23, Saraswathi Nagar, Thirupapuliyur Cuddalore - 607 002 Phone: 8608615621 Email: ecccuddalore@gmail.com

ECC Tiruvannamalai

Avalurpet Road, Tiruvannamalai - 606 604 Phone: 04175 - 298033 Email: ecctiruvannamalai@gmail.com

ECC Salem

31/20, Sree Rangan Street, Gugai, Salem - 636 006 Phone: 9994941050 Email: eccsalem1@gmail.com

ECC Vellore

No: 10, Pillayar Koil Street GribblesPet Arakkonam Vellore District - 631 002 Mobile : +91 98946 32302 Email id: eccvellore@gmail.com

ECC Trichy

No: 4/74, Sangililyandapuram Pettavaithalai & Post Tiruchirappalli District - 639 112 Landline : 0431-2612597 Mobile : +91 9788203997 Email id : ecctiruchirappalli@gmail.com

Understanding the different charges borne by an electricity consumer (Part 4)

The [previous issue](#) explained meter related charges borne by consumers for an electricity service connection. This edition will explain other meter related charges and a few sections of Tamil Nadu Electricity Regulatory Commission's (TNERC) Miscellaneous Charges Tariff Order in [M.P no. 36 of 2022 dt. 09.09.2022](#)

F. Inspection and testing of meter when dispute arises in the accuracy: In the event of suspected meter inaccuracy (with the consumer receiving an unnaturally high bill compared to the previous consumption pattern, or the utility noticing an abnormally low consumption), the following steps can be taken: **A)** Firstly, consumers can check the accuracy of the meter through the Meter Relay Test (MRT). It is conducted by a separate wing of TANGEDCO. Under the [Miscellaneous Charges Order](#), the consumer can get the MRT report from TANGEDCO by paying Rs.20 per page of the report. **B)** If the consumer is not satisfied with the MRT report, the consumer can apply for another test, or a challenge test, at a third-party testing laboratory accredited by the National Accreditation Board for Testing Calibration Laboratories (NABL) as per Regulation 7(9) in [Tamil Nadu Electricity Supply Code 2004](#). The testing charges have to be paid directly to the laboratory. If the challenge test results are in favor of the consumer, the utility will reimburse the testing charges to the consumer.

MRT Report Contents: Any meter test conducted by TANGEDCO or a third-party laboratory will have a meter reading data called the "meter reading report". This data will be downloaded by an electronic tool called Common Meter Reading Instrument (CMRI). The MRT report will have details such as meter number, meter name, voltage details, number of power outages, consumption details, etc.

G. Fees for periodical inspection: Regulation 30 of [Central Electricity Authority \(Measures relating to Safety and Electric Supply\) Regulations, 2010](#), states that "*every installation shall be periodically inspected and tested at intervals not exceeding five years either by the Electrical Inspector or by the supplier as may be directed by the State Government*". Periodical inspections are conducted at all consumer premises to check accuracy of the installed infrastructure such as meters, wires or to find out if there is any leakage or theft of electricity. This is necessary to ensure that the consumer is not undercharged or overcharged due to technical errors. TANGEDCO collects Rs.25 as the inspection and testing fees, towards these periodical inspections.

H. Charges for replacement of consumer meter card: A consumer meter card is a "white foldable card" used by TANGEDCO that contains information such as consumer details, service connection number, electricity charges, etc. As per Regulation 5(9) of the [Tamil Nadu Electricity Supply Code 2004](#), the white meter card is given free of cost at the time of installation. If the card is full, TANGEDCO will replace it with a new card, free of cost. If the meter card is lost or damaged, TANGEDCO will charge Rs.5 per card under the recent Miscellaneous Charges Order.

I. Temporary disconnection at the request of the consumer: Regulation 5(6)(2) of the [Tamil Nadu Supply Code, 2004](#) states that domestic consumers can get their electricity connection disconnected temporarily. It could be for reasons such as ongoing construction work at the premises, or if the house is unoccupied for a period of time etc. The temporarily disconnected service connections will not be assessed during that period. This will help prevent unnecessary or erroneous charges by the utility. Under the recent [Miscellaneous Charges Order](#), those seeking temporary disconnections have to submit an application in the local section office along with payment of Rs.1000/-.

6. Reconnection charges : Reconnection of electricity service is usually under these two circumstances :

(i) When the consumer, whose service was disconnected on non-payment of dues, pays his bills and the service now needs to be restored or ii) in the case of temporary disconnection. Regulation 5(8) of the [Tamil Nadu Supply Code, 2004](#) states that TANGEDCO shall collect charges to reconnect service. The following are the charges borne by the consumers for service restoration: a) Rs.300 for overhead service connection b) Rs.500 for underground service connection. The service connection will be given immediately on payment of dues and reconnection charges.

(To be continued)

Tamil Nadu News

Tamil Nadu finally notifies Energy Conservation Building Code for commercial buildings

Tamil Nadu has finally notified the Energy Conservation Building Code for commercial buildings, the last among the southern States to do so. The Energy Conservation Building Code (ECBC) was developed by the Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE), which sets minimum energy performance standards for the various components of the building. The Union Power Ministry had launched ECBC in 2007 and a revised version was unveiled in 2017. Tamil Nadu Energy Conservation Building Code (TNECBC) Rules, 2022, will be applicable to new commercial buildings with a connected load of 100 KW or more or a contracted demand of 120 kilovolt Amperes (KVA) or more or a built-up area of more than 2,000 square metres. It covers government, private and public buildings, including the existing ones for which additions or alterations are made for commercial purposes. It prescribes standards for aspects like building envelope (including walls and roofs) to minimise heat gain and dependence on artificial lighting and also the use of renewable energy. Buildings which do not utilise any energy or fossil fuel are exempted from the rules.

The cost of buildings is bound to go up. The government has to come out with an incentive in form of a rebate on infrastructure and amenity charges/property tax to promote such buildings. This will help others join the framework, said S. Sridharan, chairman, policy-housing and urban development, CREDAI National. Deepak Tewari, research fellow, WRI India, said the most important aspect would be to incorporate the notification into the building bylaws, which will then become part of building regulations and a lot of handholding would be required to the urban local bodies in the initial years for effective implementation. Tamil Nadu has launched its climate action plan recently and the building sector is not directly on the agenda. With the ECBC Code, it will lead to energy savings and the carbon footprints will be drastically reduced, thus helping in the long-term push towards net zero, said Architect Girija, consultant architect of Tamil Nadu Building Cell from Lead Consultancy and Engineering Services. "With the recent increase in electricity tariff, by following the code we are going to get 25% energy savings," she noted.

Source: [The Hindu](#), December 29,2022

India News

Rajya Sabha passes Energy Conservation (Amendment) Bill

The Rajya Sabha passed the Energy Conservation (Amendment) Bill December 12, 2022, to mandate non-fossil sources of energy and establish a domestic carbon market in India. This comes after the Lok Sabha passed the amended bill in August 2022. The bill was also amended in 2010. "The passage of Energy Conservation (Amendment) Bill, 2022 in Rajya Sabha today paves the way to enhanced use of renewable energy," RK Singh, Union minister of power and new & renewable energy, wrote on microblogging website Twitter. He added that the country is relentlessly marching towards its target of reducing India's carbon intensity by 45 per cent by 2030. This goal is a part of India's updated Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC). There are two constituents of non-fossil sources: one is renewable energy (solar, wind, hydropower and biomass), and the other is nuclear energy," Singh said during the proceedings. Non-fossil sources, including hydrogen, green ammonia, biomass and ethanol are for energy and feedstock. On December 8, Jitendra Singh, minister of state for earth sciences, spoke about the progress in construction of the Kudankulam Nuclear Power Plant Units.

Of the projected installed capacity of 6,000 Megawatt (MW), the first two units are up and running. The remaining four units are under construction, the minister clarified. According to Global Energy Monitor, the government will issue carbon credits to businesses or other institutions interested in the scheme. It added that industries could sell and buy credits to meet their carbon budget. Carbon credits will not be sold to other countries, Singh said. When we sell credits to other countries, we cannot add them to our NDCs. However, he added that there is a provision to sell them to other countries when there is a surplus or a need to finance some cutting-edge technology. The amended bill aims to bring large residential buildings under the Energy Conservation regime, enhance the scope of the Energy Conservation Building Code, and amend penalty provisions.

Source: [DowntoEarth](#), December 12 2022

Consumer Focus

The utility (petitioner) is seeking outstanding dues from a consumer (the respondent) for an old service connection in their name. The consumer had failed to pay outstanding dues on a service connection to the utility company. Using [Section 56\(1\) of Electricity Act](#), which allows disconnection of supply in default of payment, the consumer's service was disconnected on the 6th February, 2018. After this, the consumer applied for a new connection which was provided by the utility on 19th March, 2018. This new connection was at a place located close to the address given for the previous connection. The consumer had regularly paid all bills for this new service connection. On 2nd March, 2021, the utility sent a letter to the consumer asking them to clear all dues pending for the first connection. The consumer did not make any payments sought in the letter. On failure to comply, the utility issued a notice of disconnection for the new line, appended with electricity bill of the new connection for the month of April 2021. On 3rd May, 2021, the consumer made a representation to the Grievance Redressal Officer (GRO) requesting rectification of the bill by deleting the past dues. While this matter was pending the consumer filed a petition before the Calcutta High Court restrain the utility from disconnecting the supply of electricity at the new premises. The petition was disposed on July 20, 2021 by ordering the GRO to decide the representation within fifteen days after receiving a copy of the order. The GRO passed an order on 16th August, restricting disconnection while directing the consumer to pay the outstanding dues through monthly installments. The consumer chose to contest this order approaching the Ombudsman. An order was passed by the Ombudsman declaring that under [Section 56\(2\)](#) utility cannot claim outstanding charges after 2 years (barred by limitation) from when it was last demanded. Aggrieved by this order, the utility filed this case in the High Court.

Sequence of events:

Disconnection of old service connection	February, 2018	The utility argued that the consumer had purposefully suppressed information regarding their connection and outstanding dues. The utility also relied on Clause 13 of West Bengal Electricity Regulatory Commission (Standards of Performance of Licensees Relating to Consumer Services) Regulations, 2010 through which it is necessary intending consumers to pay outstanding dues before getting a new connection. It was further stated that because of the different addresses, it was not possible to trace the consumer back to the defaults. The Utility finally stated that Sec.56 will apply in this case. This section allows them disconnect a service connection in order to recover the arrears. The consumer argued that the defaulting
New connection provided	March, 2018	
Letter sent by utility, directing consumer to clear all pending dues in the connection	March, 2021	
Notice for disconnection appended with electricity bill	April, 2021	
Consumer represented their grievance to GRO	May, 2021	
Consumer filed writ petition at Calcutta HC to prohibit disconnection of new service	May, 2021	
HC disposed petition by ordering GRO to decide the case within 15 days	July, 2021	
GRO passed order restricting disconnection while directing the consumer to pay the outstanding dues through monthly installments	August, 2021	

meter was disconnected on February 06, 2018 within the time stipulated under [Sec. 56 of the Act](#). There was no claim of outstanding dues after February, 2018. The consumer also argued that the time limit of 2 years specified in [Sec. 56](#) had elapsed by the time the notice was sent on 2nd March, 2021 and thus, the claim was no longer valid. Considering the facts of the case, arguments put forth, cases cited, and the statutes relied upon, the High Court passed the following order:

- [Clause 13 of West Bengal Electricity Regulatory Commission \(Standards of Performance of Licensees Relating to Consumer Services\) Regulations, 2010](#) will not apply to this case since the connection was given three years ago, it can no longer be treated as “new”
- The claim for arrears made after three years, is barred by limitation in [Section 56\(2\)](#). The order of the Ombudsman is upheld. Hence the complaint is set aside.

Note: Clauses on recovery of charges in [West Bengal Electricity Regulatory Commission \(Standards of Performance of Licensees Relating to Consumer Services\) Regulations, 2010](#) is similar to [Tamil Nadu Electricity Supply Code, 2004 clause 17-Agreement with](#)

Citizen consumer and civic Action Group (CAG)

No. 103(First Floor), Eldams Road , Chennai 600 018
INDIA

Phone: 91-44-2435 4458,
91-44-2435 0387
Email: ecc@cag.org.in

www.cag.org.in

Initiative of

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.

Editorial Team

K. Vishnu Mohan Rao

Bharath Ram G N

Akshaya S

Vanathi B

Prabhuram S

World News

The world's coal consumption is set to reach a new high in 2022 as the energy crisis shakes markets

Global coal demand is set to increase only marginally in 2022 but enough to push it to an all-time high amid the energy crisis, according to a new IEA report, which forecasts the world's coal consumption will remain at similar levels in the following years in the absence of stronger efforts to accelerate the transition to clean energy.

Global coal use is set to rise by 1.2% in 2022, surpassing 8 billion tonnes in a single year for the first time and eclipsing the previous record set in 2013, according to Coal 2022, the IEA's latest annual market report on the sector. Based on current market trends, the report forecasts that coal consumption will then remain flat at that level through 2025 as declines in mature markets are offset by continued robust demand in emerging Asian economies. This means coal will continue to be the global energy system's largest single source of carbon dioxide emissions by far.

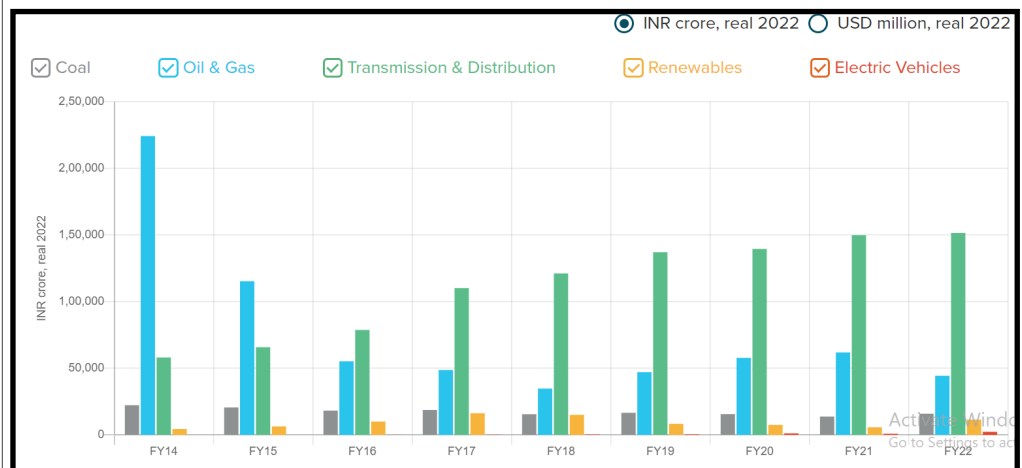
Expected coal demand in 2022 is very close to the IEA forecast published a year ago in Coal 2021, even if coal markets have been shaken by a range of conflicting forces since then. Higher natural gas prices amid the global energy crisis have led to increased reliance on coal for generating power, but slowing economic growth has at the same time reduced electricity demand and industrial output - and power generation from renewables has risen to a new record. In China, the world's largest coal consumer, a heat wave and drought pushed up coal power generation during the summer, even as strict Covid-19 restrictions slowed down demand.

Source: [IEA](#), December 16, 2022

Publications / Regulations

- Renewables 2022, December 2022, [IEA](#)
- The Breakthrough Agenda Report 2022, December 2022, [IRENA](#)
- Off-Grid Renewable Energy Statistics 2022, December 2022, [IRENA](#)
- Renewable Energy Auctions: Southeast Asia, December 2022, [IRENA](#)
- Renewables 2022 Global Status Report, December 2022, [REN21](#)

Mapping India's Energy Subsidies 2022



Source: [IISD](#)