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Citizen consumer and civic Action Group

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

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Acknowledgements:

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to R. Pavithra, K. Vishnu Mohan Rao, S. Saroja and the communication team at CAG for helping me with this report.

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Suggested citation: Bharath Ram, G.N. 2022. "Assessing TANGEDCO'S Compliance To Distribution Standards Of Performance (DSOP): An Analysis Of RTI Data For The Year 2016". <http://www.cag.org.in>.

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Executive Summary

Tamil Nadu Electricity Regulatory Commission's Distribution Standards of Performance, 2004, have been prescribed to ensure that all services provided by TANGEDCO adhere to minimum standards of quality and reliability, thus serving to protect consumers. Any non-adherence to these prescriptions could attract penalties. Overall, there are 18 DSOP regulations outlining the standards of performance that TANGEDCO should perform at, within specified timelines, while supplying electricity to its consumers. This includes the provision of new / temporary supply or additional load; shifting of service and transfer of service connection, among others. From the utility's perspective, its compliance with standards of performance is essentially seen as a benchmark of its performance.

The central objective of this study is to understand whether TANGEDCO has been able to adhere to these stipulated standards through scrutiny of periodical statements published by TANGEDCO and reviewed in the light of pertinent sections of the said regulation. The data for 2016 was sought and analysed. Data was gathered from 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.

Overall, TANGEDCO does not meet the prescribed standards of performance while handling consumer requests, as data obtained reveals that only 90.01% of applications were processed within the DSOP approved timelines. The study also indicates that TANGEDCO needs to set in place more streamlined communication processes that will allow consumers and the licensee to engage with each other more effectively. This could potentially solve the 77.3% of pending service requests which were delayed due to lack of action from the applicant. Setting up new service connections appears to be a particularly weak target for TANGEDCO with Chennai South showing 77.8% of its applications as pending. There is also some apparent lacunae in the type and reliability of data shared by TANGEDCO. This is made obvious in the discrepancies between the data published by TANGEDCO and the data obtained by CAG through RTIs. With

this evidence of non-adherence, it is important that TANGEDCO routinely ensures that applicants are duly compensated if their applications are not processed in time.

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Introduction

In India, access to electricity supply is highlighted as a fundamental right. Towards this end, policy initiatives such as '24 X 7 Power for all' aim to ensure that a reliable **and quality supply of electricity** is made available to all households, industry, commercial businesses, public needs, agriculture and any other electricity consuming entity. To ensure utilities do not deviate from the parameters of quality and reliable supply of power, the [Electricity Act 2003](#) under Section 57 has mandated that utilities should adhere to certain standards of performance to protect consumers. Further, the Act has also stated that non-adherence to standards of performance will attract a penalty.

The Act left the formulation of detailed regulations to the respective State Electricity Regulatory Commissions (SERCs). The SERCs are mandated to monitor if utilities comply with the regulations. The SERCs, as regulators of the sector, are responsible for balancing the interests of the utility and consumers. Their functions include: determining electricity tariff, ensuring fair policies on the subsidy, managing electricity demand and supply, and ensuring transparency in the sector.

From the utility's perspective, its compliance with standards of performance is essentially seen as a benchmark of its performance. However, in practice not much information is available on the compliance targets. There are only broad compliance targets given by utilities, especially Tamil Nadu Generation and Distribution Corporation Limited (TANGEDCO), the case study candidate. These do not reveal the true nature of compliance. This study will seek to understand the extent of a utility's compliance by analysing the data from various TANGEDCO distribution circles or field offices. The data has been sought for only 2016 which will form the basis for analysis.

In this context the Tamil Nadu Electricity Regulatory Commission (TNERC) has put in place **Distribution Standards of Performance Regulation 2004 (DSOP 2004)**. Under **Clause 3, TNERC's DSOP** defines quality of service as "providing uninterrupted, reliable electric supply at stipulated voltage and frequency, which will be the end result of its planning, designing of network, operation and service management to ensure stability in supply and prompt compliance of consumers' complaints on metering and billing". The regulations further highlight that supply with frequent power failure, fuse-off calls and voltage fluctuations will not ensure

continuity in supply and will adversely affect consumer satisfaction. It is among the 18 regulations/codes which regulate the behaviour and functioning of the utility. Overall, the DSOP regulation issued by the TNERC outlines the standards of performance i.e the minimum standards of service that TANGEDCO should perform at within specified timelines, while supplying electricity to its consumers. This includes providing services such as the provision of new / temporary supply or additional load; shifting of service and transfer of service connection, among others. The failure of TANGEDCO to achieve the targeted standards of service, entail payment of compensation to the consumer as per prescribed regulation. For example, if a consumer requests a new service connection, the licensee should give the supply within 30 days based on the consumer category and upon inspection. If failed to do so, it should compensate an amount of Rs.100/- per day of delay subject to a maximum of Rs.1000/-.

Objective:

The central objective of the study is to understand whether TANGEDCO has been able to adhere to the standards of performance stipulated by TNERC's Distribution Standards Of Performance, Regulations, through scrutiny of periodical statements published by TANGEDCO and reviewed in the light of pertinent sections of the said regulation.

Background and motivation for the study:

As per clause 23, DSOP Regulations, “**Level of Performance**” specifies that the licensees are required to achieve the targeted performances in 13 different individual service areas such as giving new supply/additional load and shift of service etc. Further, in order to evaluate the overall level of performance, **Clause 24, Information on Standards of Performance**, highlights that “TANGEDCO as the distribution license shall furnish the information on (i) the level of performances achieved, (ii) number of cases in which compensations were paid and (iii) the aggregate amount of compensation paid, once in six months”.

As per the above highlighted sections, TANGEDCO has been regularly publishing data (Figure 1) on its achieved level of performance in the format prescribed by the regulation. A review of the data published from 2016 through 2018 suggests that TANGEDCO has largely achieved its target level of performance, and in some cases, the target has also been surpassed. For example, DSOP regulation highlights that the targeted level of performance within a period of

six months to provide new supply connection/additional load shall be 95%. Published data indicates that between October 2016 and March 2017, TANGEDCO's achieved level of performance in providing new supply/additional load is 97.07%.

TAMILNADU GENERATION AND DISTRIBUTION CORPORATION LIMITED (TANGEDCO)			
		Home	To know Level of performance Details
TANGEDCOs Level of performance for 01.10.16 to 31.03.17			
S.No	Description	Target	Achieved
1	Restoration of supply during interruption	95%	98.42%
2	Replacement of failed Distr.Transformer	95%	99.03%
3	Giving new supply/additional load	95%	97.07%
4	Refund of balance deposit in temporary supply	90%	95.19%
5	Shifting of service	90%	98.53%
6	Change of Tariff	95%	98.56%
7	Transfer of service connection	95%	98.51%
8	Complaints in Billing	95%	98.41%
9	Replacement of meters	95%	97.10%
10	Voltage fluctuations / voltage complaints	90%	96.95%
11	Responding to consumer complaints	90%	97.78%
12	Making and keeping appointments	95%	98.53%
13	Grievances handling	100%	100%
14	Aggregate compensation paid	Rs.	0

Figure 1 - Level of performance, as per TANGEDCO's website

Further, it must be noted that TANGEDCO has put out the figures based on information received from its circle offices across Tamil Nadu. This data has been converted into a broad percentage against the stipulated percentage target. As a result, this data does not provide for more in-depth analysis except for the fact that TANGEDCO achieved and has even exceeded the target set by TNERC in all parameters from restoration of supply to grievance handling. Even though the achieved level of performance is reportedly higher than the target, it must be observed that there is a lack of adequate information in the report of the total number of applications, the number of pending applications, the time taken to process applications, and compensation given. This lack of detail does not allow scrutiny with regard to accuracy of the reported level of performance.

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. In 2016, 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:

1. Chennai North - Chennai North, Chennai Central and Chennai West
2. Chennai South - Chennai South and Chengelpattu
3. Coimbatore - Coimbatore South, Coimbatore Metro, Tiruppur and Udumalaipettai.
4. Erode - Gobichettipalayam and Mettur

Distribution Standards of Performance, 2004 Regulations

Tamil Nadu Electricity Regulatory Commission's Distribution Standards of Performance, 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 Low Tension consumers
No extension or improvement work	Within 30 days
Extension and improvement without distribution transformer	60 days
Extension and improvement with distribution transformer	90 days
<i>Compensation for consumers in case of failure to meet the above standards: Rs.100/- per day of delay subject to maximum of Rs.1000/-</i>	

Table 1: Time schedule providing supply for the new service and additional load on request

2. **Temporary supply:** The licensee should provide temporary supply for consumers applying under categories such as construction of residential houses, complexes, commercial complexes, industrial premises within the prescribed time schedule provided in the table below.

Category	Time Schedule for Low Tension consumers
Extension and improvement without distribution transformers	60 days
Extension and improvement with distribution transformers	90 days
<i>Compensation for consumers in case of failure to meet the above standards: Rs.100/- per day of delay subject to maximum of Rs.1000/-</i>	

Table 2: Time schedule providing supply for the temporary supply connection

3. **Shifting of service connection / deviation of lines and shifting of equipment:** As specified in the Tamil Nadu electricity supply code, the charges for shifting of service connection have to be borne by the consumer. The licensee is expected to shift the existing service connection after the payment. The prescribed time schedule for shifting of existing service connection:

Category	Time Schedule for LT
Shifting Meter/service	25 days
Shifting of LT/HT line	60 days
Shifting of Transformer Structure	90 days
<i>Compensation for consumers in case of failure to meet the above standards: Rs.100/- per day of delay subject to maximum of Rs.1000/-</i>	

Table 3: Time schedule for the shifting of service connection

4. **Transfer of service connection:** Transfer of service connection should be effected within 7 days from the date of receipt of application from the consumer. If the licensee fails to meet the standards, the affected consumer is eligible for compensation of Rs.100/- per day of delay subject to maximum of Rs.1000/-

Findings of the study:

Findings suggest that there is a difference 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.

Figure 2 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.

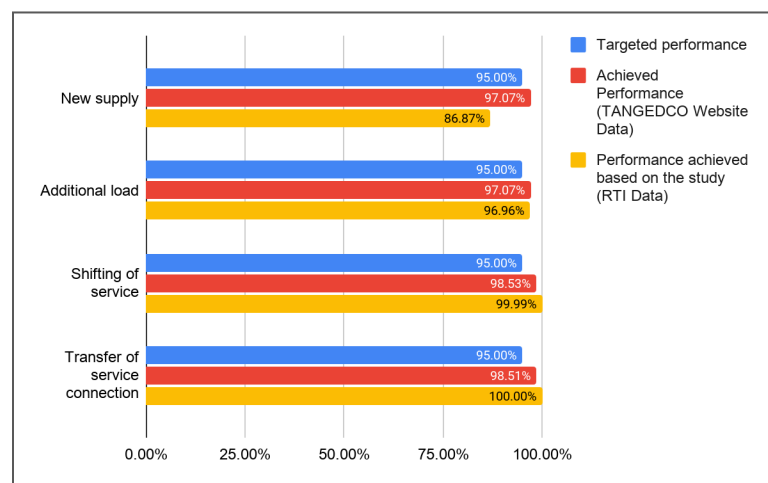


Figure 2: TANGEDCO's Level of Performance for 2016

1. **New Supply:** TNERC DSOP regulations have set the targeted performance for providing new service connections within the [stipulated time](#) (page no 4) at 95%. But, it is observed that only 86.87% of the applications have been processed within the stipulated time. While 9.42% applications have been processed beyond the stipulated time, 3.71% remained

pending at the time of 2016. Further, at a regional level, data indicates that Chennai North region and Chennai South region have not achieved the targeted performance. In the Chennai North region, 93.74% applications were processed within the stipulated time period, 3.19% applications were processed beyond the stipulated time period, and 3.07% remained pending. In the Chennai south region, 73% applications have been processed within the stipulated time period and 19.08% applications have been processed beyond the time schedule and 7.92% remained pending. In the Coimbatore region, 95.26% applications have been processed within the stipulated time, 4.72% applications have been processed beyond the stipulated time and 0.02% remained pending. Whereas in the Erode region, 96% applications have been processed within the stipulated time and 3.93% applications have been processed beyond the stipulated time and 0.07% remained pending.

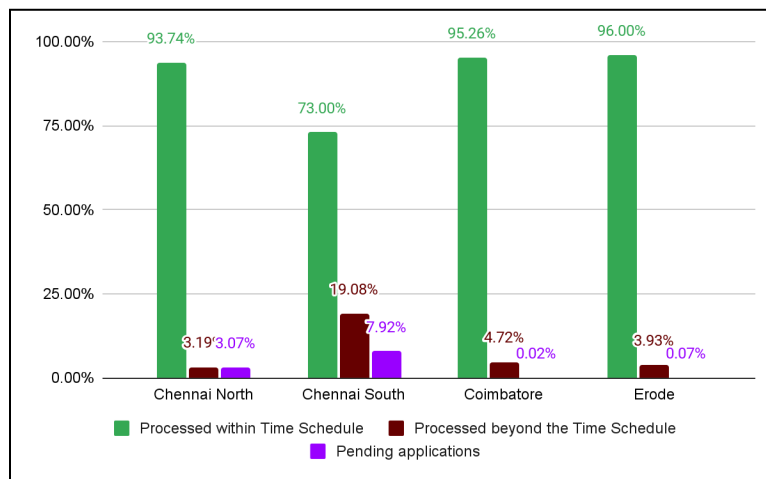


Figure 3 : Level of performance for new supply in 2016

In comparison with the Chennai regions, Coimbatore and Erode regions have processed a higher percentage of applications within the stipulated time and met the targeted level performance outlined by the regulations. In the Coimbatore region, 95.26% applications have been processed within the stipulated time, 4.72% applications have been processed beyond the stipulated time and 0.02% remained pending. Whereas in the Erode region, 96% applications have been processed within the stipulated time and 3.93% applications have been processed beyond the stipulated time and 0.07% remained pending. As per the RTI data, and the provisions under the DSOP regulations, TANGEDCO should have ideally compensated a sum of Rs 25,96,700/- for the applications that were not processed within the stipulated time. Yet, data reveals that there were no instances where applicants were compensated on such grounds.

2. **Additional Load:** TNERC DSOP regulations have provided the [time schedule](#) (page no 6) for supplying additional loads to existing serving connections. As per the regulations, TANGEDCO should supply the additional load within thirty days of receiving the applications. In order to assess TANGEDCO's level of performance on this, TNERC has

set 95% as its targeted performance (i.e) 95% of the total applications received should be processed to the satisfaction of the consumer within 30 days. time. The RTI data indicates that it has surpassed the targeted performance as it is observed that 96.96% (12,139) of the applications were processed within the stipulated time. Only 2.92% (366) applications were processed beyond the time period and 0.12% (15) remained pending.

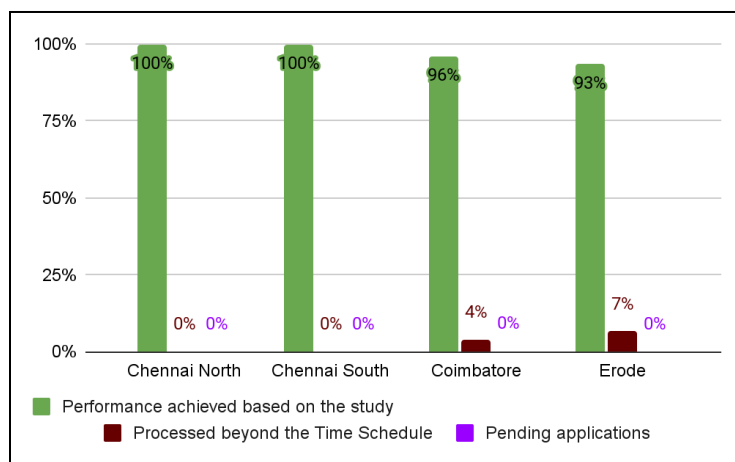


Figure 4 : Level of performance for additional load in 2016

At the regional level, data shows that Chennai North, Chennai South and Coimbatore have achieved more than the targeted performance. The Chennai North region and Chennai South region had processed 100% of the applications within the mandated time period. In the Coimbatore region, 95.98% of the applications have been processed within the stipulated time. While 3.79% applications were processed beyond the time period, 0.23% remained pending.

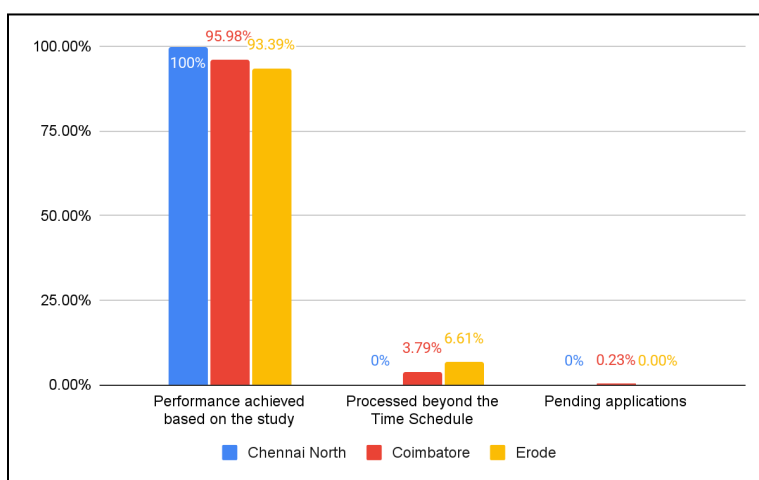


Figure 5 : Additional Load - Comparison between regions

Now, let us take the example of the Erode distribution region. In comparison to Chennai and Coimbatore regions, Erode region did not achieve the targeted performance of 95%. Data reveals that only 93.39% of the applications were processed within the stipulated time (6.61% were not.). 6.61% applications did not meet the timelines due to delay in processing. Thus, the Erode region did not adhere to the standards of performance. This shows lack of monitoring of performance and follow up at the district levels.

As per the RTI data and the provisions under the DSOP regulations, 2.92% (366) applications for additional load connections were not processed within the stipulated time. As per Clause 21, DSOP regulations, an average of Rs 36,600/- (366 applications) should have been ideally compensated for these applications that were processed after the mandated time. The compensation is calculated based on the minimum amount (i.e) *Rs.100/- per day of delay subject to maximum of Rs.1000*. The data reveals that no compensation has been paid to consumers for non-adherence nor have consumers applied for compensation. The latter situation may be due to lack of awareness on the part of the consumer to demand compensation.

3. **Temporary Supply:** As per TNERC [DSOP regulations](#) (page no 6), the time schedule for providing temporary supply connections to consumers is thirty days from the date of receiving the applications. TNERC has set 95% as the targeted performance to assess TANGEDCO's level of performance (i.e.) 95% of the total applications submitted should be processed within 30 days. The data from RTI shows that 97.47% (24,097) of the applications submitted for obtaining temporary supply connections were processed within the time schedule, which is more than the targeted performance. 2.53% (626) of the applications were processed beyond the time schedule recommended by the DSOP regulations.

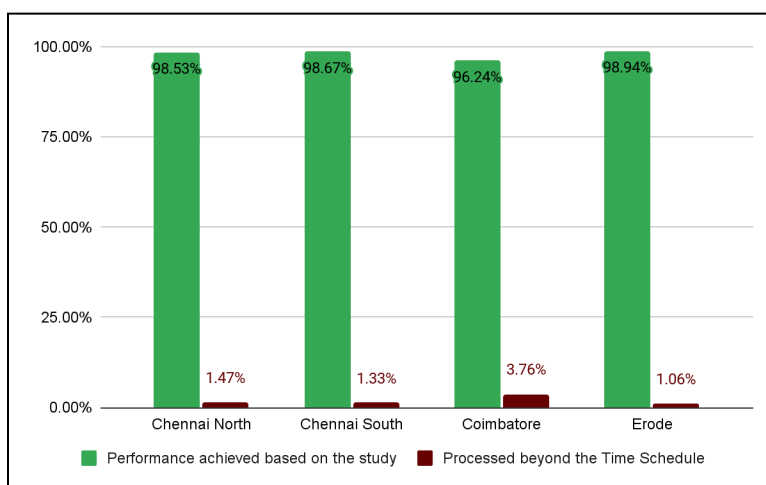


Figure 6 : Level of performance for temporary supply in 2016

When comparing a few representative regions of TANGEDCO, Chennai North, Chennai South, Coimbatore and Erode regions have achieved more than the targeted performance. The Chennai North region had processed 98.53% of the applications within the mandated time period while 1.47% applications had been processed beyond the recommended time period. The Chennai South region had processed 98.67% of the applications within the time period and 1.33% applications were processed beyond the time period. The Coimbatore region had processed 96.24% of the applications within the time period, and 3.76% applications beyond the time period. The Erode region has processed 98.94% of the applications within the time period and 1.06% applications have been processed beyond the time period.

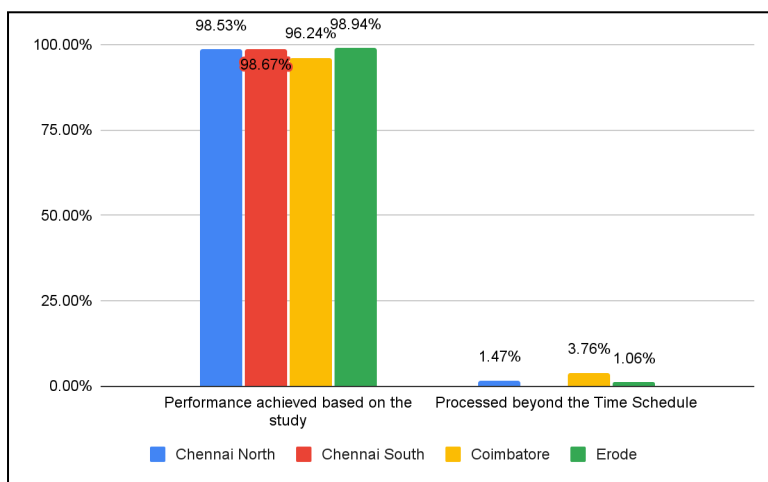


Figure 7 : Temporary supply - Comparison between regions

During the period, the study reveals that 2.53% (626) of applications were processed beyond the time period and are eligible for compensation under the DSOP regulations. As per Clause 21, DSOP regulations, Rs.100/- per day of delay subject to maximum of Rs.1000 to be compensated for not adhering to the standards. Therefore, an average of Rs 62,600/- should have been paid as compensation for the applications that were processed beyond the time period. The compensation is calculated based on the minimum amount Rs.100/-. But the data reveals that no compensation has been paid to consumers for non-adherence nor have consumers applied for compensation.

4. Shifting of Service Connection: As per TNERC [DSOP regulations](#) (page no 7), whenever consumers request for shifting of service connection, the discom is expected to process such requests within the below mentioned timeline:

- Shifting of meter/service - 25 days from the date of receiving the applications
- Shifting of LT/HT lines - 60 days from the date of receiving the applications
- Shifting of transformer structures - 90 days from the date of receiving the applications

In order to evaluate whether the discom adheres to the above prescribed timeline, data around shifting of service connections were collated via RTI requests filed across 43 distribution circles. Responses thus collated reflect a high level of expediency with 99.99% of requests related to shifting of service connections being processed within timelines. TNERC outlines that 95% of the total applications submitted across the above three categories should be completed within the corresponding timeline. It must be observed that on this account, TANGEDCO's level of performance surpasses the targeted performance set by the TNERC.

Data from RTI suggests that out of 36,140 applications from consumers to shift the service connections, only 4 applications were pending/not processed within the timeline recommended by the DSOP regulations. These 4 applications that remain pending belong to the distribution region of Erode.



Figure 8 : Level of Performance for Shifting of Service connections in 2016

As per Clause 21, DSOP regulations, a compensation of Rs.100/- per day of delay subject to maximum of Rs.1000 is to be paid to the consumer for not adhering to the standards of performance. In this specific instance, it is for not completing requests to shift service

connections within the prescribed timelines. Given that there were 4 consumer applications that were not processed within the stipulated time period, the aggregate amount of compensation paid as per DSOP should range anywhere between INR 400/- and INR 4,000/- But, data collated via RTI responses highlight that no compensation was paid for non-compliance of standards in shifting service connections.

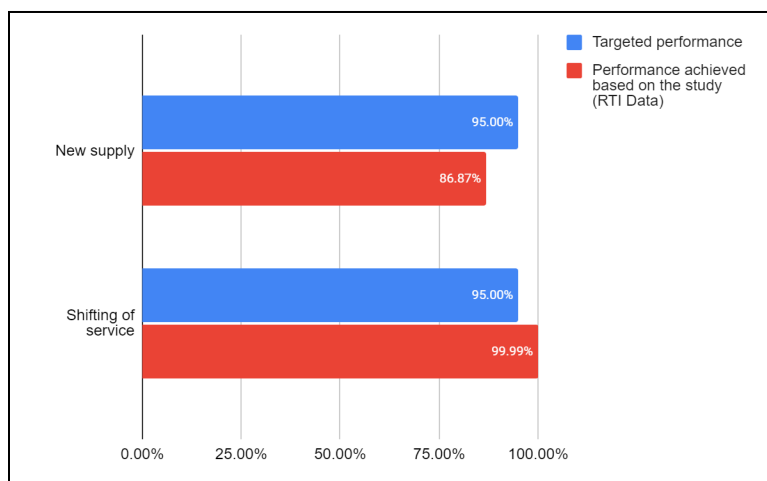


Figure 9 : Shifting of Service connections - comparison between targeted performance and performance achieved in 2016

Comparing TANGEDCO's level of performance in shifting service connections with providing new supply, it is observed that there is a need to better the timeliness of service for the latter. Although the discom surpasses the target of performance set by TNERC in shifting service connections, it fails to meet the target in providing new supply to its consumers in a timely manner. TANGEDCO's performance in processing consumer requests to shift service connections in an expedient manner should be commended. At the same time, there is a need to ensure that this translates in the discom's other essential services such as providing new supply.

5. **Transfer of Service Connection:** As per TNERC [DSOP regulations](#) (page no 7), whenever consumers request transfer of service connection, the discom is expected to process the application within 7 days from the date of receiving the application. In order to evaluate whether the discom adheres to the above prescribed timeline, data around transfer of service connection was collated via RTI requests filed across 43 distribution circles.

Responses thus collated reflect a high level of expediency with 100% of requests related to transfer of service connections being processed within timelines. TNERC outlines that 95% of the total applications should be completed within the corresponding timeline. It must be observed that on this account, TANGEDCO's level of performance surpasses the targeted performance set by the TNERC.

In Chennai North, Chennai South, Coimbatore and Erode regions, all 23,311 applications received for transfer of service connections were completed as per regulations, without any delay.

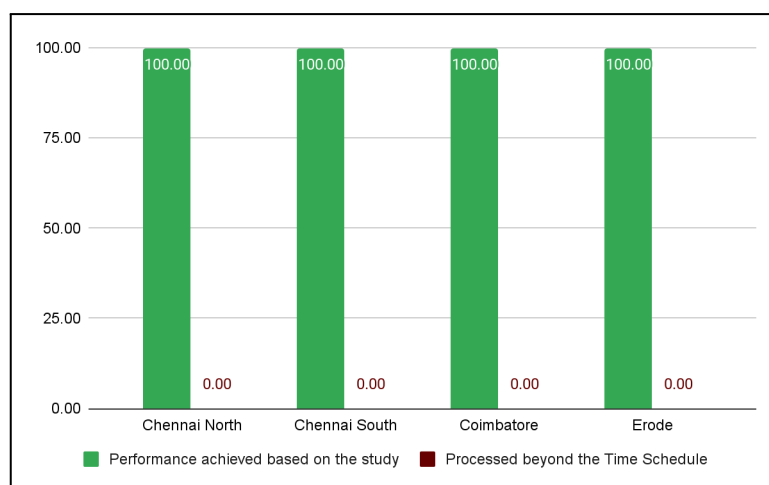


Figure 10 : Level of Performance for Transfer of Service connections in 2016

When compared with new supply connections and additional load, the discom has been more expedient with transfer of service connections. This shows that the distribution company works efficiently when it doesn't involve any infrastructure requirements.

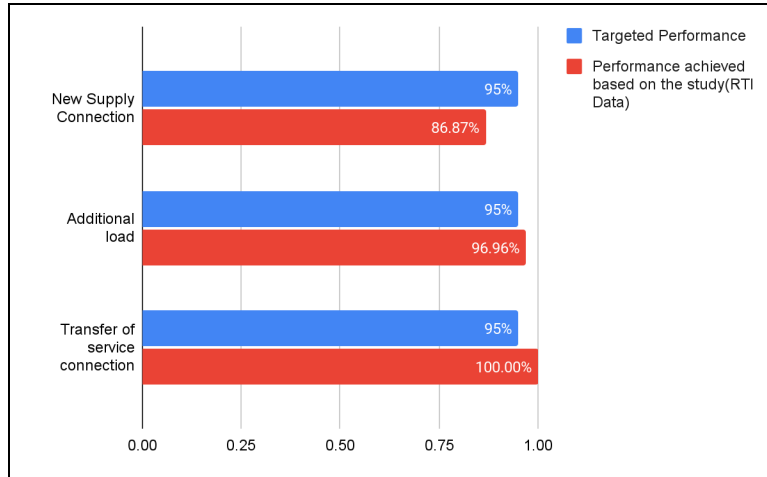


Figure 11 : Transfer of Service connections - comparison between targeted performance and performance achieved in 2016

100% of transfer requests and 96.96% of requests for additional load were processed within the prescribed timeline, thus meeting the targeted performance mark of 95%. On the other hand, only 86.87% of requests for the new supply connection were processed within the prescribed timeline. This indicates that the discom failed to achieve its targeted level of performance in processing new supply connection requests. This also implies that there are many pending applications under request for new supply connections and additional load.

Key Findings from the study:

1. **TANGEDCO does not meet the prescribed standards of performance while handling consumer requests:** Data around electricity consumers' requests/applications to TANGEDCO was collected from 43 distribution circles across five service areas.

In 2016:

- Total applications received - 3,72,410
- Applications processed within stipulated time period - 3,35,211 (90.01%)
- Applications processed beyond stipulated time period - 26,963 (7.24%)
- Pending applications - 10,236 (2.75%)

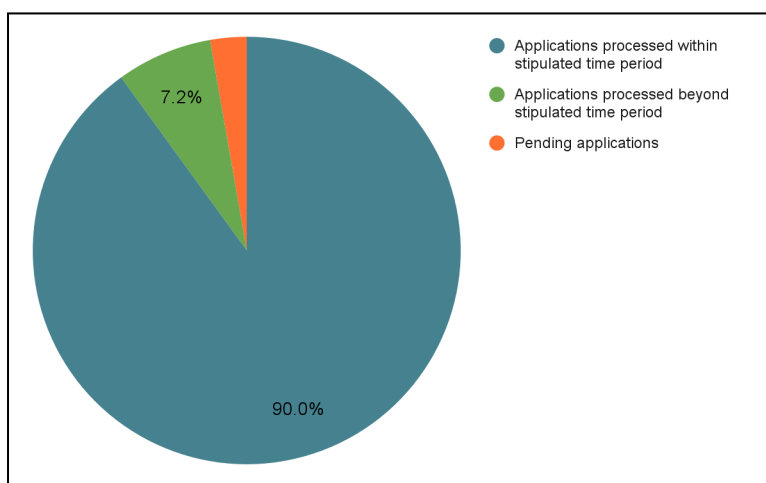


Figure 12 : TANGEDCOs Level of Performance in 2016

Although the majority of the applications (90%) are processed within the stipulated time period, it is still lower than the average target level of performance (95%) set by Tamil Nadu Electricity Regulatory Commission (TNERC).

2. **The process of handling consumer requests needs to be streamlined:** It is observed that at the time of the study, a total of 10,326 applications remain pending with TANGEDCO. When inquired about the cause of delay via RTIs, the discom cited the below reasons in response. TANGEDCO revealed that out of the pending applications, for:
 - 7917 applications (77.34%) - Consumer was not ready. This might have been because consumers did not complete necessary steps to avail service connections. For example,

the consumer might have not completed the wiring for the building, not paid the security deposit or not submitted the required documents for availing service connections

- 2054 applications (20.07%) - consumers had not submitted a compliance certificate (compliance certificate is the document submitted by a consumer when requesting a new service connection/additional service connections for multi-storied buildings. The consumer submits a certificate, to confirm compliance with standards set by other government agencies, e.g. Town and Country Planning Department, Chennai Metropolitan Development Authority, Fire Department, etc.
- 218 applications (2.13%) - no reasons were cited.
- 25 applications (0.24%) - the required materials were claimed to be out of stock meaning that the Infrastructure materials like meter, pole, EB wires would have not been supplied to the consumer.
- 22 applications (0.21%) - cancellations were received from consumers.

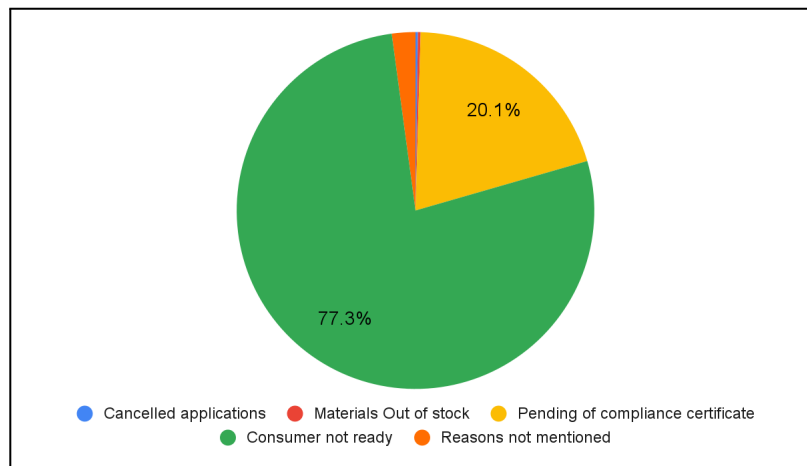


Figure 13 : Reasons for Pending complaints

77.3% of pending service requests appear to have been delayed due to delays from the consumers and not the department. 20.3% of applications that were kept pending pertains to the non submission of the completion certificate. Both the reasons speak of the lack of an effective line of communication between the discom and the consumers. It also highlights the need to streamline the process of request handling.

3. **There is a need to expedite consumer requests for new service connections:**
TANGEDCO's published data on its statewide level of performance (2016) reveals that the distribution company (discom) surpassed its target of performance while handling all of its consumer requests/applications. Whereas, RTI data collected on the same suggests that

TANGEDCO did not meet the target set by TNERC while processing requests for new service connections. I.e. The discom took longer than the prescribed timeline to provide new service connections to its consumers. On comparing the four regions, it is observed that Chennai South has 7948 (77.8%) pending applications which is the highest. Chennai North has 2233 (21.8%) pending applications, Erode has 31(0.3%) and Coimbatore has 9 (0.1%) pending applications.

4. **Distribution circle, Chennai South can perform better while handling consumer requests for new service connections:** Among the pending applications, 10,221 were requests to avail new service connections.

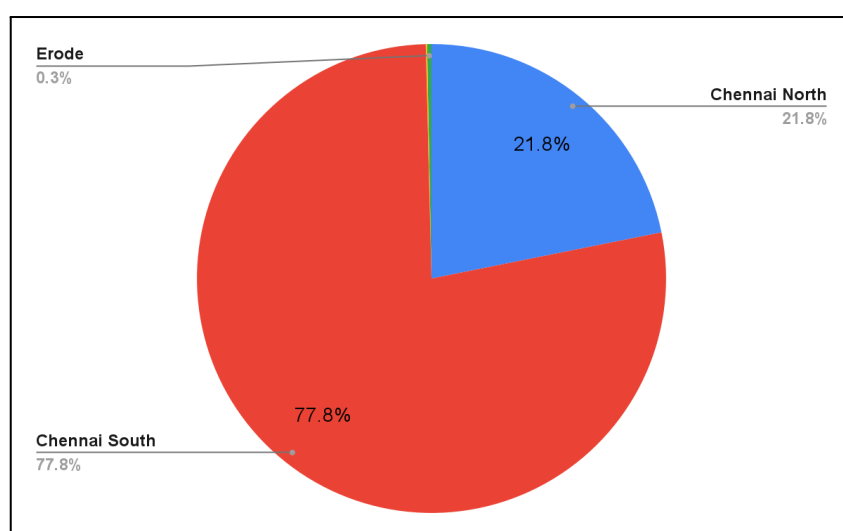


Figure 14 : New Service Connection - Pending Applications

On comparing the four regions, it is observed that Chennai South has 7948 (77.8%) pending applications which is the highest. Chennai North has 2233 (21.8%) pending applications, Erode has 31(0.3%) and Coimbatore has 9 (0.1%) pending applications.

5. **TANGEDCO should accurately reflect the level of performance around providing new service connections:** TNERC Distribution standards of performance regulations (DSOP), 2004 outlines the standards of performance i.e the standards of service that TANGEDCO should perform within specified timelines, to achieve the targeted performance for the service areas, to compensate for non-adherence of standards and to publish the level of performance. One of the key standards outlined by TNERC is that TANGEDCO should process 95% of service requests within the stipulated time, failing which the discom will have to compensate consumers for the same.

The periodical statements released by TANGEDCO on its level of performance present that the targeted performance for providing new service connections was achieved within the stipulated time. i.e. 95% of requests for new service connections were processed within the time stipulated in the DSOP. On the contrary, the data collected through RTI for the year 2016 across 43 distribution circles reveals that only 86.67% of new service connections were processed within the prescribed time. Such inconsistency indicates a mismatch between the figures presented by the head office and circle offices in publishing the discoms performance. It further suggests that there is a need for TANGEDCO to improve the line of communication and data sharing while improving its level of performance in processing requests for new service connections

6. **TANGEDCO should ensure that applicants are duly compensated if their applications are not processed in time:** During 2016, TANGEDCO received 3,72,410 applications for the five service areas. 26,963 applications which were not processed in time and 10,236 applications which were kept pending should have been compensated. Therefore, a total of 37,199 consumers should have received compensation of anywhere between Rs.100 and Rs.1000, based on their respective cases. Assuming that each consumer received the minimum compensation, a sum of Rs.37,19,900 should have been the aggregated compensation paid by the discom. Whereas, the statements released by TANGEDCO highlight that no compensation was paid to consumers during the said period. The discom should ensure that consumers are duly compensated in instances where their service requests are not processed in time. Further, the number of cases in which compensation was paid and the aggregate compensation amount should be recorded in TANGEDCO's statements on its level of performance.
7. **TANGEDCO should publish detailed region specific information around the applications processed, on a regular basis:** As per DSOP Regulations, 2004, *Regulation 24, "Information on Standards of Performance"*, indicates TANGEDCO publishes six month statements on the discom's overall level of performance. These statements do not provide information around the level of performance specific to regions/distribution circles. Studying the RTI data collected across 43 distribution circles reveals that there is a significant difference in level of performance between the regions. This difference is striking, especially in handling consumer requests to provide new service connections.

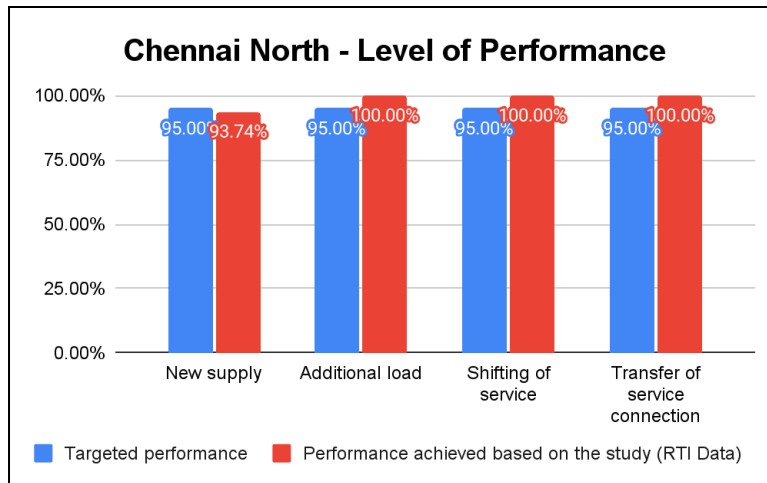


Figure 15 : Level of Performance - Chennai North

When comparing regions on assessing the level of performance for the five service areas where TANGEDCO should have achieved 95% as the targeted performance, in Chennai North region, 93.74% applications were completed within the time period for providing new service connections, which is less compared to the targeted performance. In the other four service areas, TANGEDCO has surpassed the targeted performance.

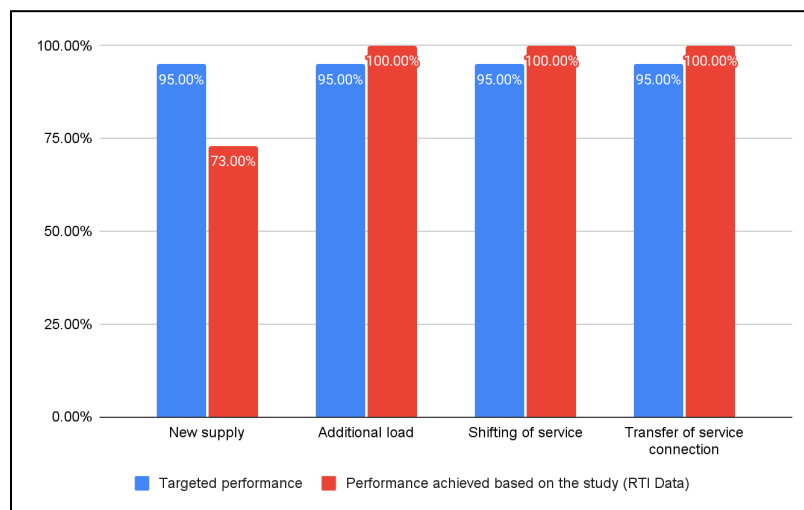


Figure 16 : Level of Performance - Chennai South

In Chennai South region, TANGEDCO's performance was achieved to the fullest i.e. 100% of the applications were completed in the prescribed time for providing the additional load, shifting of service connection and transfer of service connection. On the other hand, TANGEDCO was able to achieve only 73% in providing the new supply connections for the consumers which is lower than the targeted performance.

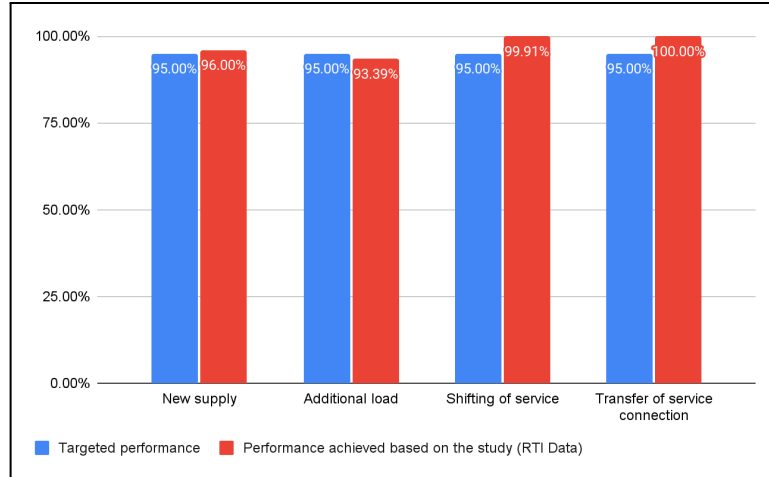


Figure 17 : Level of Performance - Erode

In the Erode region, TANGEDCO was able to achieve the targeted performance for new service connection, shifting of service connection and transfer of service connection. But, the performance achieved for providing additional load was 93.39 %, which is lower than the targeted performance.

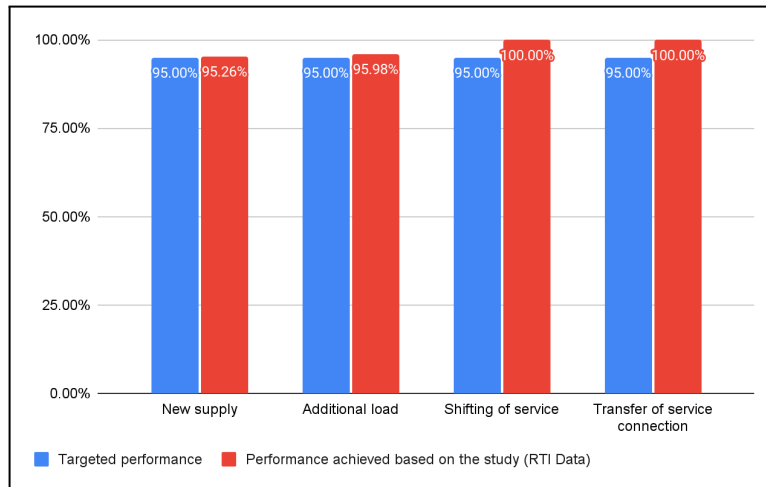


Figure 18 : Level of Performance - Coimbatore

When compared to Chennai North, Chennai South and Erode regions, TANGEDCO was able to achieve the targeted performance (i.e 95%.) for all the service areas in Coimbatore region. When comparing the service areas in coimbatore region, TANGEDCO had surpassed the targeted performance (95%). All the applications received for shifting of service connections and transfer of service connections were duly completed in the time. The data presented above highlights the difference in level of performance across regions in handling consumer requests.

This is not captured in the periodic statements published by TANGEDCO. Alternatively, if such detailed region specific information is published regularly, it will aid the discom in developing a targeted approach to enhance the level of performance.

5. **TANGEDCO should streamline its process of handling consumer requests:** RTI data analysis reveals that there were several instances where TANGEDCO should have followed up with consumers in order to complete consumer's requests. Data shows that 10,236 consumer applications were not completed within the stipulated time due to reasons such as 'the consumers could not provide the required supporting documents to process the requests'. In these cases, it may be that consumers were not adequately guided or informed by discom officials about the necessary documentation. This suggests that there is a need to improve communication between consumers and discoms and that there is a strong need to streamline the process of handling consumer requests.

Conclusion

TNERC'S DSOP standards are a consumer friendly regulation that, if fully enforced, could potentially create a service provider that is truly responsive to the needs of the consumer. Ideally, the performance of the licensee should be captured, analysed and placed within the public domain, consistently and in a transparent manner. Unfortunately, this is not the case; and this study was therefore constructed to understand TANGEDCO's levels of performance as seen through the DSOP lens.

The study indicates that there is much room for TANGEDCO to improve, in terms of response times. A key finding from the study shows a much deeper malaise in the system, where communication between the service provider and the consumer is inefficient and confusing. Establishing proactive systems of communication that will engage the consumer, and help them meet the terms and conditions as set forth by TANGEDCO could potentially solve much of the perceived non-adherence to operating standards. Setting this up could create an ecosystem of trust, within which it is easier to meet standards of excellence. Another systemic change needs to be in the quality of data that is shared with the public as this is critical in establishing operating standards. Above all, penalties as fixed in the regulations need to be employed consistently, to ensure that the service provider is held accountable at all times and is constantly striving towards excellence.