

		Date	Month	Year
1	Date of Receipt	30	07	2025
2	Date of Registration	04	08	2025
3	Decided on	01	10	2025
4	Duration of proceeding	57 days		
5	Delay, if any.	—		

BEFORE THE CONSUMER GRIEVANCE REDRESSAL FORUM
B.E.S. & T. UNDERTAKING

(Constituted under section 42(5) of the Electricity Act 2003)

Ground Floor, Multistoried Annex Building,

BEST's Colaba Depot

Colaba, Mumbai - 400 001

Telephone No. 22799528

Grievance No.FN-017-2025 dtd. 04/08/2025

Mr. Sanjay Kothari

.....Complainant

V/S

B.E.S.&T. Undertaking

.....Respondent No. 1

Present Coram : Hon'ble Chairman (CGRF) : Mr. M.S. Gupta

Hon'ble Independent Member : Mrs. A.A. Acharekar

Hon'ble Technical Member : Mr. J.W. Chavan

On behalf of the Complainant : Absent

On behalf of the Respondent No.1 : BES&T Undertaking

1. Mrs. M.B. Ugale, Superintendent, Customer Care 'FN Ward

2. Mr. J.M. Walinjkar, Sup (P), Customer Care 'FN' Ward

Date of Hearing : 18/09/2025

Date of Order : 01/10/2025

Judgment

- 1.0 The instant grievance is in respect of high bill for June' 2025 of the Complainant having A/c. No. 658-277-033 and Meter No. E-153618, installed at A/303, 3rd Floor, Plot No. 34, Sanjeev Apartment CHSL., N.S. Mankikar Marg, Chunabhatti, Sion (E), Mumbai - 400022 (herein after mentioned as 'the said premises').
- 1.1 The Complainant case in a very narrow compass is that he had received high bill for June' 2025 (during the period from 16-05-2025 to 13-06-2025) from the Respondent. Accordingly, on 21.06.2025, he sent an email in this regard to the Respondent and lodged a high bill complaint by email. On 23.06.2025, the Respondent without making any enquiry, mechanically replied to the Complainant that the billing was done as per periodic reading and the reading was progressive as per consumption. On the same day at 05.00 pm, the Complainant took a Snapshot of the meter reading and recorded the same by letter dated 24.06.2025 addressed to the Assistant Administrative Manager (F/N Ward) of the Respondent attaching a copy of the said Snapshot. On 27.06.2025, the physical copy of electricity bill showed electric meter reading taken on 23.06.2025 with 15480 kWh recorded. Another Snapshots on 28.06.2025 by the Complainant showed meter reading as 15459 kWh. On 03.07.2025 site inspection was carried out observing actual meter reading as 15486 kWh. Further, during reply to the Complainant after the inspection on 14.07.2025, the Respondent accepted that recording of meter on 14.07.2025 was 15538 kWh. He also realized that the meter reading shown in the bill of June' 2025 was recorded erroneously by the Meter Reader as 15480. It could not have been 15434 after 10 days i.e. on 23.06.2025. Again on 28.06.2025, he recorded the aforesaid fact by an email. However, the Respondent has not responded. Thus the aforesaid bill was prepared on the basis of wrong meter reading.
- 1.2 On 03.07.2025, Mr. Arvind Madavi, Meter Reader of the Respondent, again took meter reading and inspected the said premises. The Complainant again took the meter reading on the same date and it was 15486. This was also recorded by the Complainant in his email dated 04.07.2025, but to no effect. Despite that, the concerned Officers of the Respondent did not admit the same or give any refund but decided to justify the bill somehow.
- 1.3 The Complainant further submitted that, therefore, he is entitled to claim compensation from BEST for wrongly collecting the amount in advance in June' 2025 for the units not consumed and also modest sum of Rs. 15,000/- for harassment and mental agony, due to aforesaid deficiency in service on the part of the BEST. As such, he prayed for direction to the BEST to pay him Rs. 15,000/- as compensation and any other relief as this Forum may deem fit.
- 2.0 The Respondent categorically stated in his reply that for the month of June' 2025 i.e. meter billing period was 16.05.2025 to 13.06.2025, the BEST's Meter Reader has taken the meter reading on 13.06.2025 when the reading was 15480 kWh as per record and Consumer was billed for 242 Units. As against this on 23.06.2025, the Complainant has shown meter reading as 15434 kWh. On repeated complaint by the Complainant, BEST's Meter Inspector visited the site on 03.07.2025 and took the meter reading which was 15486 kWh. After investigation, it was observed that reading inserted on

13.06.2025 for June, 2025 bill was wrong and overcharged. The Respondent accepted that meter reader has inserted wrong reading inadvertently for June' 2025 bill.

2.1 Bill of June' 2025 was billed for the higher units consumption during the period from 16.05.2025 to 13.06.2025 when the temperature was high. Generally during the hot period, consumption of electricity usages vary between 15 to 100 units for an average Consumer. Respondent has stated that billing for June' 2025 is as per actual consumption and the Complainants consumption has not crossed the limit of high consumption criteria as compared to earlier months. Hence, the system does not record high consumption and the reading was found progressive. For the Complainants aforesaid mail as well as letter, the Respondent collectively replied on 14.07.2025 and 25.07.2025 informing about over reading credit of Rs. 119.34 and the same was processed in system. This was effected in August' 2025 bill, so as to attend the high bill complaint. There is no intention of harassment and mental agony. As such, the compensation of Rs. 15,000/- is unfounded, exaggerated and liable to be rejected.

3.0 From the rival submission of the parties following points arise for our determination with finding thereon for the reasons to follow :

Sr. No.	Points for determination	Findings
1	Is Complainant entitled for the compensation from the Respondent?	Yes
2	Whether complainant is entitled for the compensation of Rs. 15,000/-?	As per final Order

REASONS

4.0 On the date of hearing of the matter, i.e. on 18.09.2025, neither the Complainant nor his representative were present for submission of their oral argument. So, we have heard the Representatives of the Respondent. We have gone through the documents filed by both the parties. Admittedly the Complainant is having an electricity A/c No. 658-277-033 and Meter No. E-153618. He has been regularly paying the electricity bills to the Respondent. For the month of June' 2025, the meter billing period was 16.05.2025 to 13.06.2025, he has received an electricity bill showing current reading as 15480 kWh and units consumed as 242. From 21.06.2025 repeatedly he lodged complaint with the Respondent by sending emails as well as letters lodging high bill complaint of June' 2025. On 23.06.2025, the Respondent by his email informed the Complainant that the billing was done as per periodic reading, which is progressive as per consumption. The said mail also stated that, if the Complainant is not satisfied then he should visit Office of the Respondent with latest meter reading photo on his mobile from Monday to Friday between 09.30 to 12.30 and 14.00 to 15.30 hrs.

4.1 The Complainant has replied to the said email by his letter dated 24.06.2025 enclosing Snapshots of meter reading taken on 23.06.2025 but all his exercise failed in vain.

- 4.2 According to the Respondent on 03.07.2025, Meter Inspector visited the site and took the meter reading as 15486 kWh. The Representative of the Respondent admitted that the Meter reader has inserted wrong reading for the bill of June' 2025.
- 4.3 By email dated 14.07.2025, the Officer of the Respondent informed the Complainant that, the Officer was new and replied to Consumer on basis that reading is observed progressive in the system. Hence, the representative of the respondent vehemently argued that the wrong meter reading was inserted inadvertently for the bill of June' 2025. There was no intention of harassment to the Complainant. The credit of Rs. 119.34 was given to the Complainant which was effected in August' 2025 bill. Accordingly, the said case was closed on 25.08.2025.
- 4.4 The Complainant has contended that he has faced harassment and mental agony due to the non response and deficiency in service from the Respondent and has prayed for the compensation of Rs. 15,000/-. However, the Complainant has not submitted details of how the compensation claim of Rs. 15,000/- has been derived at. The provision under Clause 25.2 of the MERC (Electricity Supply Code & Extended of Performance of Distribution Licensee including power quality) Regulation, 2021, quotes as under :

"The Distribution Licensee shall be liable to pay to the affected person, such compensation as provided in Annexure II to these Regulations.

Provided further that any person who is affected by the failure of Distribution Licensee to meet the standard of performance specified under these Regulations for the parameters not entitled for automatic compensation as per Annexure II and who seeks to claim compensation shall file his claim with such Distribution Licensee within a maximum period of sixty (60) days from the time such a person is affected by such failure of the Distribution Licensee to meet the Standards of Performance :

Provided further that the compensation shall be payable as per Annexure II to only those affected persons / Consumers who have paid all their bills to the Distribution Licensee within the due date of each bill without any delay in last one year or in case where supply has been provided for a shorter period, such shorter period shall be consider and there is no outstanding amount to be paid to the Licensee except for current bill which is not due."

- 4.5 In the instant case the Complainant has paid all his bills well before the due dates. The Forum notices that despite of repeated complaints of high bill, instead of taking prompt steps, the Respondent has mechanically replied that the billing was done as per periodic reading and reading was progressive, as per consumption. Thus, it is difficult to countenance the view propounded by the Representative of the Respondent that there was no harassment or fault on the part of the BEST in forwarding the electricity bill for the month of June' 2025 to the Complainant and that credit of Rs. 119.34 has already been given to the Complainant in the bill of August' 2025. It is pertinent to note that no details of bifurcation for the said credit of Rs. 119.34 has been forwarded by the Respondent to the Complainant. Besides, nothing has come on record as to what sort of enquiry the BEST has undertaken in respect of the said Meter Reader, who has taken wrong reading. Moreover, only after repeated complaints received from the Complainant, the Meter Inspector was sent to the site and inspection was done. Then and then only this issue of wrongly taking meter reading of a particular Consumer has

been discovered. Otherwise, such type of practice may have been continued with other Consumers too. The word 'inadvertently' used by the Respondent has to be explained in detail, as to in what manner the said Meter Reader has taken wrong entry that to only of the Complainant and / or also of the other Consumers.

- 4.6 Judged in the above background, the Forum comes to the conclusion that certainly the Complainant was being indirectly harassed by the Respondent or there was lack in proper service rendered by the Respondent. Eventually, the Complainant is entitled for reasonable compensation as provided under the Code. As per Annexure II referred in Clause No. 25 of the of the MERC (Electricity Supply Code & Extended of Performance of Distribution Licensee including power quality) Regulation, 2021 level of compensation payable to consumer for failure to meet Standards of Performance for resolution of billing complaints of Consumers are mentioned at Sr. No. 5 (II)(ii). Whereupon, a compensation of maximum of Rs. 250/- per week till 25.08.2025 is entitled to be levied in this case.
- 5.0 In this view of the matter the point No. (1) is answered affirmative and we pass the following order as answer to point No.2.

ORDER

1. The Grievance No. FN-017-2025 dtd. 04/08/2025 is partly allowed.
2. The Respondent is directed to issue compensation of Rs. 2,500/- to the Complainant within 15 working days from the date of this Order.
3. The Respondent is directed to randomly inspect the site and monitor meter reading activity regularly, so as to regulate and avoid recurrence of such incidents. Also, submit report of the action taken to investigate whether similar incidents have been observed with false reading recorded by meter reader.
4. Copies of this order be given to all the concerned parties.


(Mr. Jitendra W. Chavan)
Technical Member


(Mrs. Anagha A. Acharekar)
Independent Member


(Mr. Mahesh S. Gupta)
Chairman

