

## BEFORE THE ELECTRICITY OMBUDSMAN (MUMBAI)

(Appointed by the Maharashtra Electricity Regulatory Commission  
under Section 42(6) of the Electricity Act, 2003)

### REPRESENTATION NO. 73 of 2025

In the matter of disputed billing

Sangita Gopal Rathod (User)..... Appellant  
(Late Gopal Tulshiram Rathod- Original Consumer) (C.No.215510029441)

V/s.

Maharashtra State Electricity Distribution Co. Ltd. Khed..... Respondent  
(MSEDCL)

#### Appearances

Appellant ; Anil Sudhakar Rathod, nephew

Respondent ; 1. Pramod Babrekar, Ex. Engineer  
2. S. V. Jadhav, Dy. Manager


**Coram: Vandana Krishna [IAS (Retd.)]**

Date of hearing: 25<sup>th</sup> August 2025

Date of Order : 18<sup>th</sup> September 2025

### ORDER

This Representation was registered on 14<sup>th</sup> July 2025 under Regulation 19.1 of the Maharashtra Electricity Regulatory Commission (Consumer Grievance Redressal Forum and Electricity Ombudsman) Regulations, 2020 (CGRF & EO Regulations 2020) against the order dated 15<sup>th</sup> May 2025 in Case No. 18 of 2025 passed by the Consumer Grievance Redressal Forum, Kolhapur (the Forum). The Forum in its order has made the following observations:

  
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- 1) *The Respondent has corrected the bills issued for the period from April 2023 to July 2023 hence the prayer of the Appellant to again revise the said bills is rejected.*
- 2) *Despite payment of testing fees by the Appellant, the Respondent has delayed the testing of meter. Hence, as per Regulation, the Respondent shall deduct Rs.250/- from the next billing cycle as compensation for delayed meter testing.*
- 3) *Other prayers of the Appellant are rejected.*

2. Aggrieved by the order of the Forum, the Appellant filed this Representation. An e-hearing was held on 25<sup>th</sup> August 2025 through video conference where both the parties were heard at length. The Appellant's submissions and arguments in brief are as below. *[The Electricity Ombudsman's observations and comments are recorded under 'Notes' where needed.]*


- (i) The Appellant is a Commercial Consumer (No. 215510029441) with electricity supply since 10.02.1993. The connection details are tabulated below:

Table 1:

Name of Consumer	Consumer No.	Address	Sanct. Load	Date of Supply	Purpose	Tariff Category
Gopal Tulshiram Rathod	215510029441	Shop No.1, Kelkar Naka, Dapoli, Ratnagiri.	0.50 kW	10.02.1993	Mobile Shop	LT II A Commercial

The shop deals with the sale of mobile phones and related accessories.

The Appellant is regular in payment of electricity bills, and billing was carried out based on **actual meter readings up to February 2023**. The Appellant's mobile shop remained closed from **12.03.2023 to 19.03.2023**. On 12.03.2023, the meter reading

  
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was 2954 kWh. On reopening the shop on 20.03.2023, the Appellant observed that the meter display was blinking with the following error indications:


N CUT (Neutral Cut)

EL (Earth Leakage)

REV PULSE (Reverse Pulse)

At that time, the meter reading stood at 2965 kWh, showing abnormal consumption of **11 units** despite non-usage. The Appellant immediately made a complaint to the Respondent on 22.03.2023, pointing out that the meter was recording consumption without any load. The Respondent advised the Appellant to lodge an online complaint. Accordingly, the Appellant registered Complaint No. 0000027335543, but no response was received from MSEDCL despite repeated follow-ups.

- (ii) Thereafter, for the months of **April, May and June 2023**, the Respondent did not record actual meter readings and instead issued **average bills of 35, 39 and 27 units respectively**. No further bills were received until **08.09.2023**, when the Appellant was suddenly served with a bill of Rs. 8,280/- towards accumulated arrears. The Appellant objected to this bill, explaining that the meter was faulty and that such units were never consumed.
- (iii) Despite this objection, the Respondent persuaded the Appellant to pay Rs.5,000/- out of the total disputed bill, along with a testing fee of Rs.260/-, under threat of disconnection. Accordingly, on 15.09.2023, the Appellant made the said payment. Further follow-ups were made on 20<sup>th</sup>, 22<sup>nd</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> September 2023 for testing of the meter, but no testing was carried out. Ultimately, the Appellant was compelled to pay the remaining balance of Rs.3,280/- on 30.09.2023.
- (iv) Subsequently, the wireman informed that the service wire on the main pole had burnt, which was repaired, the service wire was shifted to another phase, and supply to the shop was restored on 03.10.2023. After restoration, the meter displayed no abnormal indications. The Appellant immediately approached MSEDCL officials and requested

  
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a refund of Rs.8,280/-, since the billed units were never consumed. An application for meter testing was also submitted to the Division Office at Khed on 31.07.2024, but no response was received.

- (v) Left with no alternative, the Appellant approached the Forum on 03.03.2025. The Forum, by order dated 15.05.2025, disposed of the grievance with directions quoted in the first paragraph of this Appeal. However, the Forum failed to appreciate that the meter was defective, that the fault was actually corrected by the wireman, and that the meter indications were merely reset instead of being tested.
- (vi) In the above circumstances, the Appellant prays that the Respondent be directed to refund the amount of Rs.8,280/- paid towards the disputed bill; and award compensation of Rs.2,00,000/- for loss of business caused by non-availability of supply for 206 days, which was for no fault of the Appellant.

3. The Respondent's submissions and arguments are stated in brief as follows.


- (i) The Appellant is a Commercial Consumer (No. 215510029441) since 10.02.1993. Connection details are shown in Table-1.
- (ii) The Appellant lodged Complaint No. 0000027335543 on WSS Portal of MSEDCL on 20.03.2023 regarding "N CUT, EL & REV PULSE" indications displayed on the meter, and alleged the meter to be faulty. On 22.03.2023, the Appellant submitted a written complaint alleging that the meter had recorded consumption despite the shop being closed [refer Para 2 (ii)]. A further complaint regarding the meter being faulty was filed on 06.04.2023.
- (iii) The Respondent did not ignore the complaint; In its CRM report dated 20.06.2023, the closure remark recorded was: *"Please contact the Section Office for replacement of faulty*

  
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meter”, and the complaint was closed. *[Note: Such a casual and irresponsible response shifts the responsibility to the consumer, asking him to run around to various MSEDCL offices. The Respondent should avoid such responses, and instead forward the complaint to the concerned office itself for suitable action.]*

- (iv) The meter was installed inside the shop. In March 2023, billing was done based on actual reading (2940 kWh). From April to June 2023, the meter reader was denied access, and therefore bills were issued on average basis under *Reading Not Taken (RNT)/Lock Status*.
- (v) In July 2023, the meter was forcibly read at 3323 kWh, covering 4 months’ period. The consumption worked out to 383 units (=95.6 units/month), and the system software auto-adjustment deducted the previously charged average bills. The Appellant communicated that no bills would be paid unless the meter was checked. He was advised to pay Rs.5,000/- against outstanding bills of Rs.8278.25 and Rs.260/- towards meter testing charges. Accordingly, on 09.09.2023, the Appellant deposited the said amounts. The Respondent, vide letter dated 13.09.2024, forwarded the meter for testing. *[Note: It is not clear why the Respondent took one year to send the meter for testing.]* **On 13.09.2024, the Meter Testing Unit conducted the test and found the meter in order.** The Khed Division confirmed this through its letter dated 20.09.2024. Meanwhile, the Appellant had paid the balance amount of Rs. 3280/- on 30.09.2023. Thereafter, bills were raised strictly as per actual meter readings, and the Appellant has been making regular payments.
- (vi) The Appellant filed a grievance before the Forum on 03.03.2025 (about 17 months after paying the bill). A site inspection was carried out on 06.03.2025 by AEE, Dy. Manager, Asst. Accountant, and Section Officer, Dapoli City. The inspection confirmed that the meter was functioning satisfactorily. The Appellant was billed as per actual readings, and the connected load comprised 2 Tubes, 2 Fans, 1 Lamp, and 6 Switch Boards. It was observed that the meter box seals were missing.

  
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- (vii) No written complaint was filed by the Appellant regarding “no supply” in the shop for the period 20.03.2023 to 03.10.2023. The “no supply” allegation raised before the Forum is therefore denied as fabricated and an afterthought.
- (viii) The Forum, by its order, rejected the grievance application principally as meter found working satisfactorily. The Forum directed to pay compensation as per Maharashtra Electricity Regulatory Commission (Electricity Supply Code and Standards of Performance of Distribution Licensees including Power Quality) Regulations, 2021 (Supply Code & SoP Regulations 2021) as there was delay for meter testing. Accordingly, Rs.250/- SoP penalty for delay in meter testing was credited in the bill of June 2025.
- (ix) **The Respondent submitted that the indications of *Neutral Cut, Earth Leakage, and Reverse Pulse* do not affect meter accuracy, but merely serve as warnings of possible external influences (e.g., mobile high-frequency signals or magnetic field near the meter).**
- (x) In view of the above facts, the Respondent prays that the Appellant’s representation be rejected.

4. During the course of the hearing, the Respondent was directed to confirm the line repair work allegedly carried out by the line staff on 03.10.2023. In compliance, the Respondent, vide letter dated 04.09.2025, stated that as per information from retired Artisan Shri Prakash Pawar, the service wire, the incoming service wire terminal, and the outgoing meter connection were all found in proper condition and had never been repaired. The Appellant’s allegation is not based on facts.

### **Analysis and Ruling:**

5. Heard the parties and perused the documents on record. The Appellant is a Commercial Consumer (No. 215510029441) since 10.02.1993 and runs a mobile shop. Connection details are shown in Table-1.

  
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6. The Appellant contended that the shop remained closed from 12.03.2023 to 19.03.2023. After the shop reopened on 20.03.2023, abnormal meter error codes appeared with 11 units recorded despite no usage. Complaint No. 0000027335543 was lodged on 22.03.2023, but no action was taken. Average bills were issued for April–June 2023, followed by an arrears bill of Rs.8,280/- in September 2023. Under threat of disconnection, the Appellant paid the amount along with testing charges, but the meter was tested only after one year. On 03.10.2023, the wireman repaired the burnt service wire, after which the meter worked normally. The Appellant therefore seeks refund of Rs.8,280/- and Rs.2,00,000/- compensation for 206 days of non-supply.

7. The Respondent stated that Complaint No. 0000027335543 was lodged on 20.03.2023 for meter error codes. In March 2023, billing was on actual reading (2940 kWh), but from April–June 2023, the meter reader was denied access and average bills were issued. In July 2023, the meter was forcibly read at 3323 kWh (=95 units/month), adjustments were made, and the Appellant paid dues including Rs.260/- testing charges. The meter which was tested on 13.09.2024 (after more than one year) was found in order. Thereafter, bills were issued on actual readings and paid regularly. An inspection on 06.03.2025 confirmed that the meter was working, though seals were missing. An Off Supply complaint (for 206 days, as alleged) was never filed by the Appellant, and this subsequent allegation was denied as an afterthought.

8. The Appellant's consumption pattern was examined, and the summary from the Consumer Personal Ledger (CPL) is presented below:

Table 2:

  
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Year	2022-23		2023-24				2024-25	
Month	Cons.	Meter Status	Initial Reading	Current Reading	Cons.	Meter Status	Cons.	Meter Status
	Units		KWH	KWH	Units		Units	
Apr	36	Normal	2940	2940	35	Locked	16	Normal
May	40	Normal	2940	2940	39	Locked	11	Normal
Jun	27	Normal	2940	2940	27	RNT	12	Normal
Jul	18	Normal	2940	3323	383	Normal	11	Normal
Aug	22	Normal	3323	3341	18	Normal	7	Normal
Sep	20	Normal	3341	3357	16	Normal	11	Normal
Oct	24	Normal	3357	3370	13	Normal	6	Normal
Nov	24	Normal	3370	3383	13	Normal	13	Normal
Dec	30	Normal	3383	3393	10	Normal	10	Normal
Jan	17	Normal	3393	3399	6	Normal	10	Normal
Feb	11	Normal	3399	3405	6	Normal	9	Normal
Mar	20	Normal	3405	3405	22	Locked	7	Normal
Note	The Appellant was initially billed on an average basis for April to June 2023 against a reading of 2940 kWh. In July 2023, the actual meter reading was recorded at 3323 kWh for four months, and the accumulated 383 units were spread out equally across the respective months. The earlier average billing was automatically adjusted and refunded by the system.							

From Table 2, it is observed that the Appellant was billed for an accumulated consumption of 383 units over four months, averaging 95.6 units per month, and the system refunded the average bills earlier charged for April–June 2023. These were summer months.

9. We have examined the technical aspects of Neutral Cut, Earth Leakage, and Reverse Pulse indications in single-phase meters, summarized as follows:

#### 1. Neutral Cut:

- This indication does not affect the accuracy of energy recording.
- In modern static single-phase meters, energy is recorded based on phase current and voltage reference; therefore, even if the neutral is interrupted, consumption continues to be correctly recorded.

  
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- The indication functions only as a diagnostic warning of abnormal wiring or possible tampering.

## 2. Earth Leakage

- This indication also does not impact the correctness of energy measurement.
- Energy consumed by the load is duly recorded.
- It serves as a safety alert, pointing to insulation failure, leakage to ground, or unsafe wiring conditions, but has no bearing on billing accuracy.


## 3. Reverse Pulse (Reverse Current/Polarity)

- In cases of reversed phase–neutral polarity or reverse current flow, modern meters either record energy in the correct (forward) direction or suspend recording with a reverse flag.
- Hence, recorded consumption remains accurate.
- This indication primarily signals wrong installation or tamper attempts.

### Conclusion:

Neutral Cut, Earth Leakage, and Reverse Pulse indications are diagnostic or tamper alerts only. They do not compromise billing accuracy. Their purpose is to alert the utility to abnormal wiring or tampering, not to denote errors in energy measurement. According to the Appellant, these indications were repaired on 03.10.2023 as attended by the wireman.


Considering the above technical aspects, we conclude that the Appellant actually consumed 383 units during April–July 2023, averaging 95.6 units per month. Though this is slightly higher than the Appellant’s normal consumption pattern (as reflected in Table 2), the meter was under the Appellant’s custody inside the shop and was found in proper working condition during testing on 13.09.2024. The same meter continues in service. There is no provision for refunding the units consumed.

  
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10. The Forum's order is reasoned and speaking, and warrants no interference. Accordingly, the representation of the Appellant is rejected and stands disposed of.

Sd/  
(Vandana Krishna)  
Electricity Ombudsman (Mumbai)

  
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