BEFORE THE ELECTRICITY OMBUDSMAN (MUMBAI)

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

REPRESENTATION NO. 29 OF 2025

In the matter of abnormal billing

Nisha Chandrakant Danait …….. ……. .. …… … ...Appellant
(Consumer No. 020012062215)

V/s.

Maharashtra State Electricity Distribution Co. Ltd., Dombivali Dn.…… … Respondent
(MSEDCL)

Appearances:

Appellant : Manisha Chandrakant Danait

Respondent: 1. Amol Choudhari, Ex. Engineer, Nodal Officer & EE (Adm) Kalyan Circle I
2. S.D. Vanmore, Executive Engineer, Dombivali Dn.
3. Bindu Ravishankar, Additional Exe. Engineer, Dombivali (W) Sub-Dn.

Coram: Vandana Krishna [I.A.S. (Retd.)]

Date of hearing: 28th May 2025

Date of Order : 3rd June 2025

ORDER

This Representation was filed on 5th May 2025 under Regulation 19.1 of the Maharashtra Electricity Regulatory Commission (Consumer Grievance Redressal Forum and Electricity

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Ombudsman) Regulations, 2020 (CGRF & EO Regulations 2020) against the order dated 4th April 2025 in Case No. 022 of 2025 passed by the Consumer Grievance Redressal Forum, Kalyan (the Forum). The Forum, by its order, rejected the Appellant's grievance application of abnormal high billing for November and December 2024 by observing that the meter was found to be in proper working condition upon testing.

2. Aggrieved by the order of the Forum, the Appellant has filed this representation. An e-hearing was held on 28.05.2025. Both the parties were heard at length. The Respondent's submissions and arguments are stated first as below. *[The Electricity Ombudsman's observations and comments are recorded under 'Notes' where needed.]*

(i) The Appellant is a single-phase Residential Consumer (No. 020012062215) from 11.09.1989. The sanctioned load, address, abnormal bill of Nov. & Dec. 2024, etc., is tabulated as below:

Table 1:

Name of Consumer	Consumer No.	Address	Date of Supply	Nov. 2024	Dec. 2024	Remarks
Nisha Chandrakant Danait	020012062215	A 12, Ashapura Prerna CHS, near Mandar Mala Socy, Gupte Cross Road, Vishnu Nagar, Dombivali (W) Pin 421 202	11.09.1989	Bill of Rs. 42,303/- of 2,076 Units recorded	Bill of Rs. 9,114/- of 567 Units recorded	The consumption during 2024–25, excluding the disputed bills, ranged between 101 and 194 units per month.

(ii) The Appellant lodged a high bill complaint on 22.11.2024 at the Sub-Divisional Office regarding the excessive billing of 2,076 units amounting to Rs. 42,303/- for November 2024. A subsequent complaint was also raised for the high bill in December 2024, which reflected a consumption of 567 units amounting to Rs. 9,114/-.

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(iii) Pursuant to the consumer's request, the meter, Pal Mohan Make (No. 08203219157, 5-30 A, Type PM-101) was tested on 27.12.2024 in the presence of the consumer. The test results indicated that the meter was functioning correctly. The recorded maximum demand of the last six months' history in the memory of the meter was as below:

Table 2:

Maximumm Demand Recorded in Meter as per 6 months memory						
Month	Reading (KWH)	Max. KW	Date	Time (Hrs.)	Billing Period	
					From	To
NOV-24	20974	**6.24**	01.11.2024	20.3	09-10-2024	08-11-2024
OCT-24	20180	4.43	17.10.2024	23.3	08-09-2024	09-10-2024
SEP-24	19157	3.91	25.09.2024	24.0	07-08-2024	08-09-2024
AUG-24	18289	1.04	04.08.2024	10.0	08-07-2024	07-08-2024
JUL-24	18145	0.82	27.07.2024	9.0	07-06-2024	08-07-2024
JUN-24	17994	0.97	17.06.2024	9.0	08-05-2024	07-06-2024

(iv) The recorded Maximum Demand (MD) was 4.43 kW on 17.10.2024 and 6.24 kW on 01.11.2024, both falling within the billing period of November 2024. This MD data clearly indicates that electricity was indeed consumed through the Appellant's connection during that period, indicating an average daily consumption of approximately 69 units (i.e., 2067 units / 30 days). It is noted that data for December 2024 has not been preserved and is therefore unavailable. The consumer's connected load primarily included 3 CFLs, 3 fans, 1 geyser, 1 refrigerator, and other general-purpose electrical outlets. The Respondent highlighted the possibility of unauthorized tapping of the meter and/or the presence of defective electrical appliances in the Appellant's premises, which may have been rectified in the interim.

(v) According to the Consumer's Personal Ledger (CPL), all bills issued to the Appellant were based on actual energy consumption.

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(vi) The Appellant filed a grievance application before the Forum on 07.02.2025. The matter was heard on 11.03.2025. During the hearing, the Forum directed the Respondent to install a check meter series with the Appellant's existing meter. In compliance with the directive, a check meter was installed and remained in place from 11.03.2025 to 25.03.2025. During this 14-day period, both meters recorded a consumption of 65 units as tabulated below:

Table 3:

Meter No.	Consumer Meter	Check Meter
	08203305387	40807907
	KWH	KWH
Reading on 11.03.2025	21332	00001
Reading on 25.03.2025	21397	00066
Diff in 14 days(Units)	65	65

(vii) The Forum, by its order dated 07.02.2025 rightly rejected the Appellant's grievance application, as the meter was found to be in proper working condition during testing and was recording accurately. The same meter continues to function satisfactorily.

(viii) There are several factors that can cause a sudden increase in a consumer's electricity consumption, including:

- Unauthorized extension of load to others
- Unauthorized tapping
- Defective electrical wiring or faulty electrical appliances
- Use of old or outdated electrical devices

(ix) Meters are installed to record electricity consumption accurately. There is no scientific basis or operational tendency for a digital meter of a reliable make to register higher consumption only during a specific month and function normally during other periods.

(x) As per Regulation 4.4.1 of the Maharashtra Electricity Regulatory Commission (Electricity Supply Code and Standards of Performance of Distribution Licensees

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including Power Quality) Regulations, 2021 (Supply Code & SOP Regulations 2021):

"4.4 Charges for Electricity Supplied

4.4.1 The Distribution Licensee is authorized to recover charges for electricity supplied in accordance with such tariffs as may be fixed from time to time by the Commission."

(xi) The static meters currently in use are engineered to withstand voltage spikes within the electrical system. Each meter undergoes a series of stringent tests as prescribed by Indian Standards during the manufacturing process before being approved for mass production. The Respondent has denied the possibility of meter jumping, noting that the same meter is presently functioning correctly. It is not possible to send the meter to the manufacturer, as the manufacturer has not been on the approved vendor list for several years.

(xii) While it is acknowledged that the Appellant is a senior citizen with only two family members, the electricity bill for Nov. & Dec. 2024 cannot be revised, as the units were actually consumed. In light of the above, the Respondent prays that the Appellant's representation be rejected.

3. The submissions and arguments of the Appellant are stated as below: -

(i) The Appellant is a single-phase residential consumer (Consumer No. 020012062215) since 11.09.1989. Relevant details, including the consumer number, sanctioned load, address, and instances of high billing in November and December 2024, are provided in Table 1. The residential flat is a one-bedroom unit (1 BHK) with a built-up area of approximately 525 square feet.

(ii) The Appellant has consistently paid electricity bills on time. The Respondent issued accurate bills up to October 2024. From April 2022 to the present, monthly

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consumption ranged between 16 and 194 units, except for the months of November and December 2024.

(iii) The Appellant received a high bill of Rs.42,303/- for 2,076 units in November 2024 followed by a bill of Rs.9,114/- for 567 units in December 2024 respectively. In response, the Appellant submitted written complaints regarding the unusually high bills on 25.11.2024 and 30.01.2025, in addition to making verbal complaints at the Respondent's Sub-division office. However, the Respondent stated that the meter was found to be in order in testing. MSEDCL's investigation was primarily based on the presumption that the electric meter was functioning correctly.

(iv) The Appellant is a senior citizen (aged 80 years), residing along with her daughter who is working in a private job. The appliances of electricity are limited with Tube lights, CFL Lamps, Fans, Fridge and geyser. Given the uncertainty surrounding the spike in consumption, the Appellant urged for fair treatment with natural justice, and requested MSEDCL to withdraw the Nov. 2024 & Dec. 2024 bill, suggesting an average charge based on her consumption over the last three years.

(v) The Respondent failed to resolve the Appellant's grievance. The Appellant filed a grievance application in the Forum on 07.02.2025. During the hearing, The Forum directed the Respondent to install a series meter, which was installed and operated from 11.03.2025 to 24.03.2025. Both the original and the series meters recorded identical consumption. **Despite the Appellant's regular payment of current bills, the Respondent disconnected the electricity supply on 31.03.2025 by removing the meter. The Appellant was compelled to pay an additional Rs.5,000/- on the same day, after which the Respondent reinstalled the meter. The Forum remained silent on the issue of disconnection.**

(vi) The Forum, by its order, rejected the Appellant's grievance. It failed to consider the fact that there was no significant increase in usage or the presence of high-consumption appliances such as air conditioners in the Appellant's residence.

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(vii) The Appellant, though not technically proficient, believes that the meter functioned abnormally in November and December 2024, possibly due to a malfunction or internal bug.

(viii) In view of the above, the Appellant prays that the Respondent be directed to withdraw the abnormal bill of Rs.42,303/- for 2,076 units in November 2024, and the subsequent bill of Rs.9,114/- for 567 units in December 2024, and revised bills be issued based on the established average consumption over the previous three years.

4. During the hearing, the Respondent was directed to submit per day consumption with standard uses considering diversity factor. The Respondent by its email dated 28.05.2024 submitted the required information which is summarized as below:

Table 4

Appliances	Quantity	Wattage	Total Wattage	Total Hours	Diversity Factor	Utilization Hrs.	Calculated Units
CFL	3	40	120	24	0.25	6.0	0.72
Fan	3	60	180	24	0.25	6.0	1.08
TV	1	150	150	16	0.50	8.0	1.2
Refrigerator	1	300	300	24	0.50	12.0	3.6
Geyser	1	3000	3000	0.5	0.50	0.3	0.75
Total			3750	Per Day Cons.(Units)			7.35
				Monthly Cons.(Units)			221

Analysis and Ruling

5. Heard both the parties and perused the documents on record. The Appellant is a residential consumer (No. 020012062215) since 11.09.1989 residing at the address mentioned in Para 2(i). In November 2024, the Appellant received an abnormally high electricity bill amounting to Rs. 42,303/-

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for a consumption of 2,076 units followed by another bill of Rs.9,114 for 567 units in December 2024. The said electricity meter of Pal Mohan make (Meter No. 08203219157) was tested on 27.12.2024 in the presence of the consumer. The test results confirmed that the meter was functioning correctly. The consumer's connected load primarily comprised three CFLs, three ceiling fans, one geyser, one refrigerator, and other general-purpose electrical outlets. The consumption pattern of the Appellant, as per the Consumer Personal Ledger (CPL), is tabulated below:

Table 5:

Year	2021-22		2022-23		2023-24		2024-25		2025-26	
Month	Cons. (units)	Meter Status	Cons. (units)	Meter Status	Cons. (units)	Meter Status	Cons. (Units)	Meter Status	Cons. (Units)	Meter Status
Apr	52	Normal	66	Normal	14	Normal	126	Normal	135	Normal
May	44	Normal	123	Normal	14	Normal	144	Normal	143	Normal
Jun	44	Normal	138	Normal	21	Normal	194	Normal		
Jul	24	Normal	121	Normal	21	Normal	154	Normal		
Aug	80	Normal	42	Normal	25	Normal	143	Normal		
Sep	75	Normal	26	Normal	14	Normal	186	Normal		
Oct	84	Normal	20	Normal	14	Normal	161	Faulty		
Nov	92	Normal	28	Normal	19	Normal	2076	Normal		
Dec	46	Normal	22	Normal	21	Normal	567	Normal		
Jan	68	Normal	21	Normal	28	Normal	101	Normal		
Feb	59	Normal	18	Normal	88	Normal	103	Normal		
Mar	84	Normal	16	Normal	95	Normal	112	Normal		
Total Cons.	752	Total Cons.	641	Total Cons.	374	Total Cons.	4067	Total Cons.	278	
Avg/ month	63	Avg/ month	53	Avg/ month	31.17	Avg/ month	339	Avg/ month	139	
Highest Cons.	84	Highest Cons.	138	Highest Cons.	95	Highest Cons.	194	Highest Cons.	143	
Lowest Cons.	24	Lowest Cons.	16	Lowest Cons.	14	Lowest Cons.	101	Lowest Cons.	135	

6. The Appellant contended that the electricity meter may have recorded abnormal consumption during the months of November and December 2024. The Appellant further argued that even if the

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assessment were to be made based on the connected load, the consumption would not exceed 200 units per month at the most.

7. On the other hand, the Respondent ruled out the possibility of meter jumping. It was stated that static meters are designed to withstand voltage spikes and undergo various mandatory tests during manufacturing in accordance with Indian Standards before mass production. The Respondent also emphasized the possibility of unauthorized tapping of the meter and/or the use of defective electrical appliances by the Appellant, which may have been rectified in the meantime. The meter was tested at the Meter Testing Laboratory on 27.12.2024, and the test results confirmed that it was functioning correctly. Additionally, a series check meter was installed from 11.03.2025 to 25.03.2025. Both the original and check meters recorded identical consumption during this period.

8. An increase in electricity consumption can arise from various factors, including inefficient performance or poor maintenance of electrical appliances, as well as unauthorized extensions of the electrical supply. In this case, we note that the abnormally high consumption occurred during the Diwali period from 29.10.2024 to 03.11.2024. The possibility of unauthorized tapping cannot be ruled out. The meter was installed in the Society's meter room, where the Society serves as the trustee of the meter cabin. It is not known if the society takes adequate steps to ensure that such unauthorized tapping does not occur.

9. During the hearing, the Respondent was asked to assess the Appellant's monthly consumption based on the connected load, in accordance with the Respondent's own guidelines for calculating assessed usage. The Respondent admitted that the assessed consumption would not exceed 235 units per month. However, they declined any proposal for settlement, citing limited authority at their level. They will obey the order of this authority.

10. An analytical review of the consumption data indicates that the recorded consumption of **2,076 units in November 2024** is abnormally high and lacks reasonable justification. This figure marks a

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significant and unexplained deviation from the consumer's past usage patterns. Specifically, the **highest monthly consumption recorded over the past three years was only 194 units** (in June 2024), which makes the November 2024 reading nearly **ten times higher**. Additionally, **no diagnostic or internal technical report from the meter manufacturer** is available on record to help analyse or substantiate such an unusually high reading on a **single-phase meter**.

11. In view of the above, the Respondent is directed

    a. To revise the Appellant's bill of Nov. & Dec. 2024 considering an average consumption of 194 units per month, and

    b. To withdraw any interest and Delayed Payment Charges (DPC), if levied.

    c. To submit a compliance report within two months from the date of this order.

12. The instant Representation is disposed of accordingly.

Sd/-
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