THE ELECTRICITY CONSUMER GRIEVANCE REDRESSAL FORUM, DURG

Regional Office, Raipur Naka, Durg-491001

Letter No. 101 dtd 23/4/26

Case No. : CGRF/Durg/2026/27
Date of Registration : 27.02.2026

Zone Commissioner
Shivaji Nagar, Zone - 4
Nagar Nigam Bhilai
(B.P. No. 1008188505)

Applicant/Petitioner

Versus

Executive Engineer CSPDCL
West Division Bhilai
Assistant Engineer, CSPDCL
Power House Zone

Respondents

(Order passed on 23.04.26)

Sub: In the matter of excess billing due to improper meter reading.

Brief Facts of the Case

The petitioner is having an electricity connection bearing B.P. No. 1008188505 with a sanctioned load of 4.62 KW for street lighting purposes at Ward No. 48, near Canal Road, Ashrafi Chowk. The grievance of the petitioner is regarding excess billing due to improper meter reading. The petitioner submitted that despite raising complaints before the respondents, the issue was not resolved, and hence approached this Forum. Fourn registered the issue under the case No.27/2026 and started hearing.

O/C

Proceedings of the Case

The matter was heard on 11.03.2026, 23.03.2026, 15.04.2026, and 22.04.2026.

1. During the hearing on 11.03.26 this matter Shri Ajit Tigga SE, Shri Veshram Sinha EE and Shri Palash Vaidh Sdo from nagar Nigam bhilai present. Shri T.N. Banchor EE West div and Shri Nirmal Kumar Kurre AE power house zone present.

2. The petitioner explained their grievance before the Forum in detail and requested to resolve the grievance.

3. Respondents submitted that during Vigilance inspection dated 23.01.2025, the vigilance team detected one direct hooking at one location. Aloso excess Maximum Demand (MD) at another location Based on this, a demand of ₹11,68,250/- was raised vide letter dated 27.02.2025 Forum directed respondents to submit: Meter billing report Meter reading diary Vigilance report Second Hearing (23.03.2026) Respondents submitted required documents. Meter Reading & Consumption Pattern.

Issues to be Determined

A)Whether the billing of the consumer is correct as per the meter readings.

B)Whether the levy of power factor surcharge is valid in the absence of recorded readings.

C)Whether the billing of ₹ 39,632 /-towards excess maximum demand for the period from July 2024 to December 2024, based on the vigilance checking report, is correct.

D)Whether the billing of ₹1128618 /-raised against this connection in respect of the theft case detected by the vigilance team is justified Billing of Excess Maximum Demand Surcharges.

Observation and analysis of the Forum

(A) On examination of the records, it is observed that although meter readings have been regularly recorded in the billing system, the pattern of electricity consumption shows significant inconsistencies and abnormal variations, which raises doubts regarding the accuracy and reliability of the recorded readings. The detailed analysis is as follows:

From November 2023 to April 2024 During this period, the recorded monthly consumption ranges from 91 units to 711 units. This level of consumption appears abnormally low for a connection having a sanctioned load of 23 kW, specifically meant for street lighting purposes. Under normal operating conditions, such a load would result in substantially higher consumption. Therefore, the possibility of under-recording of consumption or improper meter reading during this period cannot be ruled out.

In May 2024, the consumption suddenly increased to 21,232 units, which is disproportionately high compared to the preceding months. Such an abrupt spike does not align with any logical consumption pattern and indicates possible irregularities such as accumulation of

previously unrecorded consumption. This abnormal spike clearly suggests that the readings of the previous period were not recorded accurately or consistently.

June 2024 to June 2025 the consumption stabilizes in the range of 2000 to 3000 units per month. This consumption level appears reasonable and consistent with the nature of the connected load, indicating that meter readings during this period were comparatively more reliable.

A smart meter was installed in July 2025, after which the recorded consumption ranges between 1700 to 2898 units per month.

This pattern is broadly consistent with the consumption recorded during the previous period (June 2024 to June 2025), thereby reinforcing the reliability of these readings. Smart meters are generally more accurate and less prone to human error, hence the readings recorded after installation can be considered as a reliable benchmark for assessing actual consumption.

Findings:-

From the above analysis, the following conclusions can be drawn: The consumption recorded during November 2023 to April 2024 is unrealistically low The consumption recorded in May 2024 is abnormally high and inconsistent The consumption pattern stabilizes from June 2024 onwards The readings recorded after installation of the smart meter are consistent and reliable Therefore, it is evident that the meter reading during the earlier period lacked consistency and accuracy, and billing based on such irregular readings cannot be considered fully reliable. Accordingly, the consumption recorded

during the smart meter period may be considered as a reasonable basis for reassessment of earlier billing.

(B) Observations by the Forum Upon examination of records for the period Nov 2023 to Jan 2026, the following was observed: Maximum Demand (MD) & Power Factor (PF) On scrutiny of the billing records and meter data for the period November 2023 to December 2024, it is observed that Maximum Demand (MD) and Power Factor (PF) parameters were not recorded in the meter readings during this entire duration. Despite the absence of recorded PF values, the respondents have levied Power Factor surcharge in the consumer's bills for the said period. This practice is found to be prima facie incorrect and unjustified, for the following reasons.

Power Factor surcharge is a parameter-based charge, which can only be applied when actual PF readings are recorded and available in the metering system. In the absence of recorded PF data, there exists no measurable basis for determining whether the consumer's power factor was below the prescribed limit. Levying such surcharge without supporting data amounts to billing on assumptions, which is not permissible under standard billing principles and regulatory norms. Similarly, non-recording of Maximum Demand (MD) during this period further indicates incomplete or deficient metering, which weakens the credibility of demand-related billing components. Further, it is a settled principle that any penal or surcharge component must be supported by verifiable and recorded data, and cannot be imposed in the absence of such measurement.

Findings:

In view of the above, the levy of Power Factor surcharge during the period November 2023 to December 2024, when PF was not recorded, is not sustainable and liable to be set aside.

(C) It has been observed that billing towards Maximum Demand (MD) has been raised for the period from August 2024 to January 2025 based on a vigilance checking report. However, it is also noted that during this period, MD was not recorded in the meter diary at the time of monthly readings, which indicates that the meter readings were not carried out properly.

As per the provisions of the prevailing Tariff Order, if the Maximum Demand of any consumer increases consecutively for three months, the contract demand (sanctioned load) should be automatically revised based on the highest MD recorded during those three months.

In the present case, the consumer's sanctioned load is 4.62 kW. Accordingly, the sanctioned load is liable to be revised to 8 kW based on the recorded demand pattern.

Finding:

Therefore, the billing of excess MD charges should be revised on the above basis with effect from October 2024 onwards.

Billing in Respect of Theft Case Detected by Vigilance Team.

(D) The records reveal that a vigilance inspection was carried out by the vigilance team on 23 January 2025 in respect of the subject connection. During the course of inspection, direct hooking was detected for lighting a playground near Naveen College without any metering system, and an unauthorised load of approximately 16 kW

was found in use. Based on these findings, an assessment was made and a demand of ₹11 lakh was raised by the respondent against the consumer.

During the initial hearing, the petitioner objected to the said billing and denied ownership or responsibility, stating that the playground does not belong to them. Subsequently, during the hearings held on 15.04.2026 and 22.04.2026, the respondent submitted a detailed report in the matter. As per the report, a re-inspection was conducted by the vigilance team on 08 April 2026. During this inspection, unauthorised utilisation of electrical load of approximately 16,000 watts was again detected in connection with lighting arrangements and other development works (specifically street lighting). It was observed that no meter has been installed at the site to record actual consumption. Furthermore, the maintenance and repair of the lighting infrastructure at this location are being carried out by the office of the Municipal Corporation, Bhilai.

The respondent also submitted that, as per both verbal communication and written confirmation received from the Principal of Naveen College, the area in question does not fall within the college campus premises but lies under the jurisdiction of the Municipal Corporation, Bhilai. Additionally, the power supply for Naveen College is separately provided and managed by Bhilai Steel Plant (BSP).
It is further noted that an application for a new electrical connection for the said area was submitted by the Zone Commissioner to the respondent's office on 13.04.2026. A photocopy of the application has been placed on record as evidence.

Findings:

Since this is a case of unauthorised use of electricity, the matter is required to be dealt with separately in accordance with the provisions of the applicable Electricity Supply Code. Accordingly, the billing for energy consumed due to unauthorised use of electricity shall be assessed and raised separately as per the relevant provisions of the Supply Code.

Order

After careful consideration of the pleadings, documents on record, and submissions made by both parties during the hearings, the Forum passes the following order:

1. The respondent shall revise the billing for the period from November 2023 to June 2025. The revision shall be based on the average consumption derived from the post–smart meter period, which is considered reliable.The abnormal spike recorded in May 2024 shall be excluded while recalculating the consumption. The revised billing shall be prepared in a transparent manner and communicated to the petitioner.
2. The PF surcharge imposed for the period November 2023 to December 2024 is hereby quashed. Any amount already recovered under this head shall be adjusted in the subsequent energy bills of the petitioner.

3. The respondent shall revise the contract demand to 8 kW in accordance with the Tariff provisions. The billing of excess MD charges shall be revised accordingly with effect from October 2024 onwards. Any excess amount recovered, if any, shall be adjusted in subsequent bills.

4. The impugned demand of ₹11 lakh raised against the petitioner is unsustainable and is hereby set aside. Since this is a case of unauthorised use of electricity, the same shall be dealt with separately as per the provisions of the applicable Electricity Supply Code, and fresh assessment, if any, shall be made against the responsible authority.

5. The Respondents is directed to fully comply with the above order and to inform the Forum office in writing within 30 days from the date of issuance of this order.

6. The above order duly passed by this order.

7. The matter is disposed off based on the facts and reports presented before the Forum.

8. If the Applicant is aggrieved by the said order passed by the Forum, they may file and apple before the Hon'ble Electricity Omdubsman, Raipur, within 45 days from the date of receipt of this order.

(Mamta Kashyap)
Member
Consumer Grievance
Redressal Forum, Durg

(P.V. Sajeev)
Chairperson
Consumer Grievance
Redressal Forum, Durg

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