

MAHARASHTRA ELECTRICITY REGULATORY COMMISSION
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Constitution of Fact Finding Committee

Date: 10 December, 2018

1. Taking serious note of media reports highlighting surge in recent electricity bills and complaints regarding billing by consumers of Adani Electricity Mumbai Ltd (Distribution Business) (AEML-D), in Suburban Mumbai, the Commission sought explanation from AEML-D on 4 December, 2018.
2. From the reply submitted by the AEML-D, the Commission prima facie feels that increase in billed consumption for October 2018 appears to be unduly high this year. It would need more detailed enquiry to verify the explanation of AEML-D. For example, what has been the impact of weather conditions on the energy consumption profile of other Distribution Licensees in Mumbai especially on the low end residential category consumers and the practices being followed by different Mumbai Distribution Licensees with respect to levy of FAC particularly for claiming past dues etc. and issuing bills on average consumption basis.
3. The Commission needs to safeguard the interest of all the Consumers, particularly those who are affected by sudden increase in electricity bill. In this context, the Commission deems it fit to appoint a Fact Finding Committee to go into, inter alia, the reasons for the sudden upsurge in the consumption / other reasons which might have led to increase in electricity bills in Mumbai and Mumbai Suburbs and recommend corrective steps, if any, to ensure that such incidence of sudden hike in electricity bills do not recur.
4. Regulation 82 of the MERC (Conduct of Business) Regulations, 2004, empowers the Commission as follows:

“82. The Commission may make such direction or order as it thinks fit for collection of information, inquiry, investigation, entry, search, seizure and, without prejudice to the generality of its powers, including, inter alia, the following :-

(a) The Commission may, at any time, direct the Secretary or any one or more Officers or any other person as the Commission considers appropriate to study, investigate or furnish information with respect to any matter within the jurisdiction of the Commission under the Act.

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5. In view of the above, the Maharashtra Electricity Regulatory Commission hereby constitutes a two member Fact Finding Committee comprising of Shri. Ajit Kumar Jain (Retd. IAS, State Information Commissioner, Maharashtra) and Shri. Vijay L. Sonavane (Ex. Member, MERC), to conduct a fact finding exercise into allegations of excessive bills received by consumers from Distribution Licensees supplying electricity in Mumbai and suburbs of Mumbai.
6. The scope of the fact finding exercise is for the period of FY 2018-19 (April 2018 to December, 2018), FY 2017-18 and any other past period, if found necessary, shall be as follows:
 - i. Fact finding of the reasons for the sudden upsurge in the consumption / other reasons which might have led to increase in electricity bills in Mumbai and Mumbai Suburbs
 - ii. Recommend corrective steps, if any, to ensure that such incidents of sudden hike in electricity bills do not recur.
7. Adani Electricity Mumbai Ltd (Distribution), Tata Power Co. Ltd. (Distribution), Brihanmumbai Electric Supply and Transport Undertaking, MSEDCL (Mulund and Bhandup circles) are directed to provide necessary information and documents as required by the Fact Finding Committee.
8. The Commission authorizes the Fact Finding Committee, if required, to visit the premise(s)/offices of above Distribution Licensees for collection of information, inquiry, investigation, entry, search, seizure, without prejudice to the generality of its powers.
9. Deputy Director (Technical) dealing with Distribution Tariff in Office of the Commission will act as the Secretary to the Committee for convening the meetings at the place and time as decided by the Committee.
10. An honorarium would be paid to Members of the Committee. Administrative order in this regard shall be separately issued by Secretary of the Commission. The Committee shall be provided full secretarial and other support by the Deputy Director Administration.
11. This Fact Finding exercise would be governed by the provisions of Electricity Act, Rules and relevant Regulations while calling any person or recording their depositions.

12. The Committee shall submit the report to the Commission by 31 March, 2019 suggesting corrective steps, if any, to ensure that such incidence sudden hike in electricity bill do not recur.

Sd/-
(Mukesh Khullar)
Member

Sd/-
(I.M. Bohari)
Member

Sd/-
(Anand B. Kulkarni)
Chairperson


(Abhijit Deshpande)
Secretary


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