



Training Programme for SERC Officials on Consumer Protection Issues
New Delhi, 16-20 February 2009

A Report of the Participants' Feedback

CUTS Institute for Regulation & Competition (CIRC) organized this programme with support from the Forum of Regulators, Central Electricity Regulatory Commission. 25 participants from various state electricity regulatory commissions took part in it.

Mr. Dipak Chatterjee, Director General, CIRC welcomed all the participants in this programme and discussed the background, aim and objectives of this training programme in brief. He also highlighted some international experiences regarding protection of consumer interest.

In his remarks, Mr. Pramod Deo, Chairperson, CERC mentioned that consumer representation is one of the most important criteria for protection of consumer interests. He opined with example from the cases of Maharashtra that consumers of rural areas are often under-represented and there are requirements of rural consumer organisations. He also opined that having only a consumer cell is not good enough. He then mentioned that the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act of 1992 has handed over certain powers to the rural areas in India and pursuing the same something more concrete needs to be done to protect the interests of the rural consumers of electricity sector.

Mr. Pradeep S. Mehta, Secretary General, CUTS International briefed the significance of such training. He opined that no economic activity is possible without consumers and electricity sector is not an exception. Electricity on the one hand, is perhaps the most important raw material for industries and on the other hand, it is one of the most needed necessities of our daily life. He also mentioned that according to the Electricity Act 2003, consumers' interests are important if not supreme. Consumers must know all the details regarding the service which they are availing. He cited the example of mobile telephone industry in India which is perhaps charging the lowest cost to the consumers in comparison with the same service in other countries across the globe due to competition.

After successful completion of all the sessions including a visit to the Consumer Care Centre of North Delhi Power Limited, on the 5th and final day there was an evaluation session. Beside the participants, there was Mr. Bipul Chatterjee, Director, CIRC along with R. Krishnamurthy, Member, CERC and Mr. V. K. Khanna, Advisor, Forum of Regulators (FOR), CERC. Participants have expressed their views on different issues in this session. Following are the discussions held on that session captured in a narrative manner.

SERCs act as a bridge. Consumers are not even aware of their rights and not many complaints reach SERC. Only cases referred by CGRF or Ombudsman come to SERC. There are some good initiatives such as that Orissa SERC came out with a booklet which can be emulated by other SERCs. It is important that cases are disposed of quickly because time is important. Even today there are complaints about the behaviour of linemen and local officials with consumers.

The Electricity Act is more or less silent about the guidelines for consumer protection. Since CERC is a nodal body, it can look into the constitution and working of consumer grievances redressal forum (CGRF) because every SERC has its own guidelines. Therefore there is no uniformity. CERC can come out with a model for better functioning of CGRFs.

There should be enough publicity so that people all over India know about CGRF and Ombudsman. According to the rules, a consumer cannot go to CGRF in certain cases but a consumer should be able to go to one window for all grievances.

At present power is being sold at high rates. It needs to be ensured that shortage is not exploited by private producers who sell energy at high rates as compared to their cost of production. In Rajasthan, the CGRF is managed by a delegate of the licensee. In some cases, a consumer has to travel 30-40 kms for small grievances. Compliance is quick because an officer of the CGRF actually redresses grievances. CUTS could do a study of the Rajasthan system vis-à-vis Delhi and UP systems to show that the former is working better. Rights and responsibilities of consumers should also be taken up and not only rights.

This programme could have been structured better focusing more on the role of CGRF and Ombudsman. The duration should not be more than three days.

There should be a national level meeting of ombudsmen to streamline consumer grievances redressal procedures. Uniformity of regulations is required.

In addition, a feedback form was circulated to every participant and asked to assess this event. The results drawn from that assessment are as follows.

Table: 1 STRUCTURE OF TRAINING PROGRAMME							
Sl. No	Name of the Participants	Quality of the presentation	Length of sessions	Quality of resource materials	Event organisation	Venue/ facilities	Total
1	R.P. Sharma, Chairperson, ECGRF, Raipur	9	10	9	10	9	47
2	V.K. Saxena, Chairperson, ECGRF, Bilaspur	7	10	8	7	7	39
3	Monika Taneja, CGRF - NDPL	8	7	5	5	2	27
4	M.A.U. Khan, Member- NGO, CGRF – BYPL	8	7	7	4	3	29
5	Hemant Kumar Member, CGRF- NDMC	5	8	5	4	4	26
6	Dharti S. Mehta Executive, GERC	7	5	5	7	8	32
7	A.M. Desai Independent Member CGRF, Madhya Guj. Vij. Co. Ltd., Vadodara	9	9	8	9	8	43
8	R.C. Desai Independent Member CGRF, Dakshin Guj. Vij. Co. Ltd., Surat	7.5	10	7	8	10	42.5
9	K.M. Ashraf Office Supdt., O/O Electricity Ombudsman	7	9	8	8	9	41
10	M.G Prabhakar Member, CGRF BESCOM	7.5	6	8	8	8	37.5
11	A.S. Kulkarni Member Advisory Committee, KERC	6	5	5	9	10	35
12	P. Parameswaran Electricity Ombudsman	4	2	3	5	6	20
13	Vijay Kshirsagar, Director (Regulatory Enforcement), MPERC	6	8	6	6	8	34
14	Manish Shrivastava Deputy Director (Transmission & Distribution)	5	9	5	6	8	33
15	Pradeep Sangane EE (CGRF) Aurangabad Zone, Aurangabad	8	10	5	7	5	35
16	O.P. Mathur, Technical Assistant To Ombudsman, Jodhur	7	5	5	7	9	33

Table: 1 STRUCTURE OF TRAINING PROGRAMME							
Sl. No	Name of the Participants	Quality of the presentation	Length of sessions	Quality of resource materials	Event organisation	Venue/ facilities	Total
17	S.S. Gupta, Joint Secretary, RERC, Jaipur	5	5	5	5	5	25
18	Thiru C. Veeramani Dy. Director (Engg.), TNERC	10	10	10	10	9	49
19	R.D. Pal Electricity Ombudsman CGRF, Lucknow	5	4	5	5	5	24
20	B.P. Mahaur Chariman CGRF, PVVNL, Meerut	9	10	10	9	8	46
21	Sri Ram Ex. CE&TECH. Member, CGRF, MVVNL, Faizabad	8	7	8	10	6	39
22	Prem Chander Chairman CGRF, Greater Noida, Gautambudh Nagar (U.P.)	6	3	4	5	6	24
23	R.P. Pandey Retd. S.E. & Member Tech. Cgrf, Bareilly (U.P.)	9	9	10	10	8	46
24	Ratan Lal, Judicial Member, CGRF, Kumaon Zone	9	10	9	10	8	46
Total		172	178	160	174	169	853

* Since Prabhat Kishore Dimri hasn't given his feedback, his name is not considered in this list.

* Rate on a scale of 1-10, where 10 represents Excellent and 1 represents Poor

From Table 1 above, we find that the modal values in case of 'Quality of the presentation,' 'Length of sessions,' 'Quality of resource materials,' 'Event organization' and 'Venue/ facilities' are 9, 10, 5, 10 and 8 respectively. These figures are quite significant for the feedback analysis and clearly explain the success of the structure of this programme.

From the following analysis, we find the percentage of satisfaction of the participants with the structure of the training programme. It again shows that on average participants were found to be satisfied with the structure of the training programme.

S.No.	Structure of the training programme	Maximum points	Points given by the participants	Percentage of satisfaction of the participants
	Category			
1	Quality of the presentation	240	172	71.6
2	Length of the sessions	240	178	74.16
3	Quality of the resource materials	240	160	66.66
4	Event organisation	240	174	72.5
5	Venue/ facilities	240	169	70.41
	Total	1200	853	71.08

* Rate on a scale of 1-10, where 10 represents Excellent and 1 represents Poor
 ** Total participants = 25
 *** Total 24 participants given the feedback

From the feedback on effective address of issues in different sessions, the following results have been found.

Sl. No	Name Of The Participants	Sessions													
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	13	14	
1	R.P. Sharma	8	1	5	5	6	9	4	10	8	8	9	7	8	
2	V.K. Saxena	5	5	5	6	6	8	5	10	7	8	8	5	9	
3	Monika Taneja	6	1	6	4	6	5	2	10	7	7	7	6		
4	M.A.U. Khan	7	4	6	5	6	7	4	9	7	6	8	6	7	
5	Hemant Kumar	9	3	5	4	5	9	5	9	6	6	6	5	8	
6	Dharti S Mehta	9	2	7	5	7	7	3	9	6	4	6	6	7	
7	A.M. Desai	8	8	7	9	9	6	7	10	9	9	10	7	9	
8	R.C. Desai	7	5	6	8	6	6	6	10	8	8	9	7	8	
9	K.M. Ashraf	7	5	5	6	6	6	5	10	6	7	7	5	6	
10	M.G Prabhakar	6	4	2	8	2.5	4	9	6	8	7	6	9	8	
11	A.S. Kulkarni	5	6	5	9	3	4	3	10	5	6	9	5	8	
12	P Parameswaran	4	1	4	4	5	2	2	9	6	6	6	3	4	
13	Vijay Kshirsagar	10	2	6	8	6	9	6	10	6	8	7	6	7	
14	Manish Shrivastava	8	10	10	10	10	10	5	10	10	8	7	8	9	
15	O.P. Mathur	7	2	7	5	7	7	0	10	8	7	9	4	7	
16	S.S. Gupta	4	4	4	5	5	4	4	8	5	8	5	8	5	
17	Thiru C. Veeramani	10	8	9	9	8	9	8	10	10	10	10	8	10	
18	B.P. Mahaur	9	3	8	7	8	9	7	10	8	9	9	7	9	
19	Prem Chander	3	3	2	4	4	3	6	9	3	8	5	4	7	
20	R.P. Pandey	9	3	8	7	8	9	7	10	8	9	9	7	6	
21	Ratan Lal	8	4	9	8	7	8	5	10	7	8	8	7	6	
	Total	149	84	126	136	131	141	103	199	148	157	160	130	148	

Since 4 participants haven't given their feedback for all the sessions, their names are not considered in this list.
 ## Session 12 has been left out since, that was a group discussion session and most of the participants haven't given their feedback on that session.

The following table represents the percentage of satisfaction of the participants with the effective address of issues in different sessions.

Table: 4 Percentage of satisfaction of the participants with the effective address of issues													
Sessions													
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	13	14
Percentage of satisfaction	71	40	60	65	62	67	49	95	70	75	76	62	70
Percentage of dissatisfaction	29	60	40	35	38	33	51	5	30	25	24	38	30