

**MINUTES OF 1<sup>ST</sup> ONE DAY WORKSHOP ON PROTECTION OF CONSUMERS' INTERESTS OF CHAIRMEN AND MEMBERS OF CGRFs OF THE STATE OF GOA AND UTs ( AND SHARING OF EXPERIENCES) ON 8<sup>TH</sup> JUNE, 2012**

**Venue: Conference Hall No. 1, India international Centre, New Delhi.**

**Present:**

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| 1. Dr. V.K. Garg           | Chairman, JERC                       |
| 2. Sh. S.K. Chaturvedi     | Member, JERC                         |
| 3. Sh. R.K. Malik          | Secretary, JERC                      |
| 4. Sh. Rajiv Amit          | Director (Engg.), JERC               |
| 5. Sh. Y.P. Chawla         | Advisor, JERC                        |
| 6. Sh. Batto Singh         | Bench officer, JERC                  |
| 7. Ms. Shikha              | Consultant, JERC                     |
| 8. Sh. V.K. Jha            | Chairman, CGRF, Goa                  |
| 9. Sh. R.L. Kalsia         | Chairman, CGRF, Chandigarh           |
| 10. Sh. Sunil Kumar Madan  | Member, CGRF, Chandigarh             |
| 11. Sh. Inderpal Gupta     | Nominated member, CGRF, Chandigarh   |
| 12. Sh. O.M. Chandrasekhar | Chairman, CGRF, Puducherry           |
| 13. Sh. D. Gunasekaran     | Member, CGEF, Puducherry             |
| 14. Sh. G. Krishnamurthy   | Nominated member, CGRF, Puducherry   |
| 15. Sh. Lal Singh          | Chairman, CGRF, Dadra Nagar & Haveli |
| 16. Sh. T.D. Davda         | Member, CGRF, Dadra Nagar & Haveli   |
| 17. Sh. S.N. Saundankar    | Chairman, CGRF, Daman & Diu          |
| 18. Sh. J.T. Bhanvadia     | Member, CGRF, Daman & Diu            |
| 19. Sh. Misbah Ashioda     | Member, CGRF, Lakshadweep            |

Hon'ble Chairman, JERC initiated for introduction of all the Chairmen and members of Consumer Grievance Redressal Forum with Team of JERC attending the Workshop. He said that the objective is to hear from the participants, as they have advantage of direct interaction with the consumers.

Secretary, JERC welcomed all the Members attending the Workshop.

Hon'ble Chairman, while addressing the meeting took a serious view regarding thin attendance and absence of the members of Andaman & Nicobar. He expressed displeasure that out of a total of 20 members of CGRF only 12 were present. He said, protection of consumer interest is one of the primary objective of the

Electricity Act, 2003. The important issue in electricity regulations is addressing the consumer grievances. Consumers have the right to have their grievances redressed in accordance with the provisions of Electricity Act.

**Shri V.K. Jha, Chairman, CGRF, Goa** informed that Member, nominated by JERC had joined sometime in the year 2010 but, CGRF actually became functional with effect from June 2011 when Chairman and Member appointed by the government of Goa joined the Forum.

Forum has a provision of a budget but still the routing of expenditure is through the Electricity Department. Further strengthening of CGRF will require legislative change in procedure/regulations.

The office of the Forum is located on 4<sup>th</sup> floor of Vidyut Bhawan but has no lift facility. Efforts are being made to remedy the situation.

They have received six complaints only during the period from June 2011 to March 2012 and all the six complaints have been addressed in time.

Soon after the CGRF became functional, Electricity Department was asked to take necessary steps regarding publicity of setting up of the Forum for creating awareness among the consumers. Accordingly, advertisement was published in all the languages including local language in the local dailies.

CGRF also convened a meeting of the officers including field level officers of the Electricity Department to create awareness regarding the functioning of the Forum and their responsibilities towards the Electricity Consumers.

The Forum is receiving number of queries from the consumers and it is hoped that with publicity and passage of time, more consumers shall approach.

**Shri R.L. Kalsia, Chairman, CGRF, Chandigarh** stated about the shortage of office space and staff, issues like funding of Forum, financial autonomy and administrative control would need to be resolved for strengthening the Forum. He said that they are generally receiving complaints regarding excessive billing, bills on average basis, replacement of defective meters and complaints on account of enhancement of load. During the year they have received 136 complaints and out of those, 128 have been attended to. They have circulated pamphlets for awareness of consumers

CGRF, Chandigarh have taken measures to create awareness about the functioning of the CGRF like Radio talk by AIR Chandigarh. Notices were published in the newspapers and CGRF at a Glance was got published and issued to consumers. Shri Kalsia further stated that mandatory information for the public as approved by JERC is not being provided by the licensee as required under "Standards of

performance Regulations”. There has been shortage of meters for the last 2 years and hence compliance of Supply code is breached. Suo Moto Petition No. 75/2012 & 77/2012 have been initiated by the Commission on the subject.

CGRF, Chandigarh stated that there is a common complaint of consumers regarding delivery of bills. The bills are delivered very late and as such they are unable to make payment within the due date, resulting in payment of surcharge in the next bill for no fault of the consumer. He said delivery of bills with adequate payment time is the responsibility of the Licensee. He said that a format for new connection (AA Form) has been submitted to the Commission for approval. On this Director (Engg.) said that the format has been received by the Commission and it will be decided soon. Director (Engg.) to take immediate action in placing the matter before the Commission for direction.

**Shri Lal Singh, Chairman, Dadra Nagar & Haveli** said that advertisement giving names, addresses and contact numbers of Chairperson, members of CGRF has been published in the leading newspapers. He said that complaints received are generally billing related, new connection/reconnection and jumping of meters etc. which are being settled within 45 days’ period. He further said that department has yet to provide facilities like separate office for CGRF with Court room facility and waiting room for complainants. CGRF Chairman, member should themselves take initiative and participate in Public Hearings.

**Shri O.M. Chandrasekhar, Chairperson, CGRF, Puducherry** said that complaints are received on mal-functioning/non-functioning and non-display of newly provided electronic meters. There are numbers of cases of “stuck up meters” and the Department is running short of meters to replace defective ones.

It has been a common complaint among consumers in various parts of UT that the meter readers are not recording the actual units consumed by seeing the meters. Another problem being faced by the consumers is that when consumers visit the collection centres for paying their current bills, the officials refuse to receive the bill amount saying that they have not received the bill statement from the department. Consumers are made to run from pillar to post and ultimately they are unable to make payment within the due date, resulting in payment of surcharge in the next bill for no fault of the consumer. He stated that this was brought to the notice of the Department and it is for the Electricity Department/Licensee to make proper arrangements.

Mr. Chandrasekhar further informed that as per the new “Supply Code”, CGRF cannot entertain complaints regarding non-provision or non-functioning of the street lights since the work relate to local bodies. Previously, such works were attended to by the Licensee and therefore, the public expects the CGRF to redress

the complaints regarding street lights. He sought clarification on imposition of penal charges on Licensee for not meeting the "SOP". Advisor (J) and Director (Engg.) to analyze the matter and place before the Commission for directions.

He said there are frequent complaints regarding the closure of collection centers or non-availability of staff at the collection centers leading the consumers to face difficulty and hardship.

He said that total 99 cases were received for the period 1.1.2011 to 31.12.2011 which were settled in time.

**Shri S.N. Saundankar, Chairman, CGRF, Daman & Diu** has informed that 10 complaints have been received by them till date. He further stated that he has been facing budgetary problems.

**Member**, JERC suggested that to create awareness about CGRF, camps should be organized so that consumers can interact easily with the forum.

**Chairman**, JERC suggested that advertisement through cable TV Network can be made which is economical way of publicity. It was also suggested that the meeting of Consumer Grievance Redressal Forum should be organized at interval of every six months.

Director ( Engg.), JERC suggested that information regarding name of the Chairperson, member, address of the CGRF, telephone number etc. may be published on the back side of the bill so that in case of any complaint, consumer can approach the CGRF as the bills are handily available to the consumer.

Secretary, JERC said that CGRF is an institution and has challenges before it. Strengthening of CGRF is required.

It was decided to constitute a Committee of four members of CGRFs chaired by Mr. V.K. Jha, Chairman, CGRF, Goa to submit its report in 10 days so that the important issues like financial autonomy, operational independence could be deliberated upon and recommendations be made about, required for strengthening of the institution of Consumer Grievance Redressal Forum. The recommendations of the 4 member Committee could be taken up for consideration at State Advisory Committee Meeting at Goa.

With this, the meeting concluded with vote of thanks to the Chair.

Sd/-  
(R.K. Malik)  
Secretary