

**MINUTES OF THE 34th MEETING OF STATE ADVISORY COMMITTEE
(SAC) OF OERC HELD ON 24.07.2023 AT 11:00 AM**

PRESENT:

1. Shri S.C. Mahapatra, Chairperson, OERC
2. Shri Gajendra Mohapatra, Member, OERC
3. Shri S.K. Ray Mohapatra, Member, OERC
4. Smt. Sambit Parija, FA-cum-Additional Secretary, Department of Energy, Govt. of Odisha
5. Shri Jyoti Kumar Lakra, Additional Secretary, Food Supply & Consumer Welfare Deptt., Govt. of Odisha
6. Shri R. N. Nayak, Ex-CMD, PGCIL
7. Shri N.N. Mishra, Ex-Director, NTPC
8. Prof. A. K. Tripathy, Former DG, CPRI, Kanan Vihar, Bhubaneswar
9. Shri Girish Chandra Mohapatra, Advocate, Rourkela,
10. Shri Shiba Dutta Bhanja, Ex-GM, NESCO
11. Prof. (Dr.) Prakash Kumar Hota, Professor of Electrical Engineering & Dean, School of Computer Sciences, VSSUT, Burla
12. Shri P. K. Pradhan, Ex-Director(Comm.) GRIDCO, Nua Road, VSS Nagar, Bargarh
13. Shri Bidyadhar Mohanty, President, Labour Union (INTUC), Jajpur Road
14. Shri Surendra Prasad Mallick, Ex-COO, NESCO
15. Smt. Saishree Pattnaik, Advocate & Notary, At-Kunjakanta, PO/Dist-Dhenkanal
16. Smt. Abanti Behera, At. Kakat, PO/Dist. Kendrapara
17. Shri Alekh Chandra Mallik, Ex-Director (Comm.), GRIDCO
18. Shri Bimal Das, Representative of Confederation of Citizen Association, Bhubaneswar
19. Shri Bibhu Charan Swain, Sr. Consultant, M/s. Power Tech Consultants, Bhubaneswar
20. Shri B. K. Mohapatra, representative of UCCI
21. Shri S.K. Mishra, CMD, OPTCL
22. Shri Trilochan Panda, MD, GRIDCO
23. Shri P.K. Mohapatra, M.D., OPGC
24. Shri A.K. Mohanty, Director (Operation), OHPC
25. Shri Arvind Singh, CEO, TPCODL
26. Shri Bhaskar Sarkar, CEO, TPNODL
27. Shri Amit Garg, CEO, TPSODL
28. Shri Gajanan S. Kale, CEO, TPWODL

SUMMARY OF THE PROCEEDINGS:

The Commission Secretary in the capacity of Ex-officio Secretary to the State Advisory Committee (SAC) convened the 34th SAC meeting on 24.07.2023 at 11:00 A.M. in the Conference

Hall of OERC. He welcomed the Chairperson & Members of OERC, all the SAC Members, Special Invitees, Directors of GRIDCO/OPTCL/OPGC/OHPC/CEO's of DISCOMs and senior officials of OERC present in the meeting.

He requested to grant the leave of absence to Shri Prabhakar Dora and Shri Sanjeev Tripathy, Members SAC. Then he requested the Chairperson to preside over the meeting and deliver his opening/introductory remarks.

The Chairperson addressed the meeting by inviting a reference to the decisions taken in the 33rd SAC meeting held before issue of Tariff Orders for FY 2023-24. He highlighted the salient features of the Tariff Orders especially the consumer friendly measures adopted in the orders, like:

- Waival of Delayed Payment Surcharge (DPS) for domestic consumers for the first time for the benefit of consumers to address no. of issues relating to DPS
- Green Tariff
- Engagement of WAPCOS for 3rd Party Inspection of CAPEX of all 4 DISCOMs
- Creation of 5 more new GRFs in Baripada & Keonjhar in TPNODL area, Bhawanipatna in TPWODL area and Bhanjanagar & Rayagada in TPSODL area.
- Field visit by Secretary and Directors of OERC to two to three Divisions of DISCOMs in each month starting in July, 2023 to study implementation and various initiatives taken by DISCOMs for better service to consumers at Division and Sub-Division level through CAPEX.
- Coordination between OPTCL and DISCOMs for optimum utilization of Grid Sub-Stations and Power Transformers (PTRs) to tackle the low voltage problem.
- Engagement of PRDC for Transmission System Study of OPTCL for long-term system planning of the State, which will be presented to the Commission by PRDC in the presence of OPTCL & DISCOMs.

Then the Chairperson requested the CEOs of four (4) DISCOMs to make presentation on Power supply position and various initiatives taken up through Capital Expenditure proposals for providing better service to consumers etc.

Accordingly, CEOs of 4 Distribution Companies (TPCODL, TPNODL, TPSODL and TPWODL) made presentations on their activities & performance etc. The DISCOMs presented on their initiatives addressing consumer grievances especially metering & billing disputes, quick release of new connections; safety initiatives including fencing around the primary Sub-Stations (PSS) and Distribution Sub-Stations (DSS)/ Distribution Transformers (DTRs). All these initiatives including functioning of Call Centres which operate round the clock (24x7) by 50 to 60 executives to forward calls to the respective mobile maintenance staff in the field. These executives also take up relevant complaints for further escalation of consumer grievances by the concerned officers for technical and commercial complaint resolution received through 1912 dialing. The DISCOMs also presented their initiatives relating to distribution system strengthening /expansion, status of 100%

metering including replacement of defective meters & installation of Smart Meters, upgradation of PTRs and DTRs, unmanned operation of Sub-Stations through SCADA, earthing, protection, relay co-ordination, Public Distribution System Centres/Anubhav Kendra for Rural Service Delivery and Rural Consumer Outreach like Project Nistha.

Thereafter, the Chairperson requested each SAC Member present in the meeting to share his/her views/suggestions, which are summarised below.

1. Shri J.K. Lakra, Addl. Secretary, Food Supplies & Consumer Welfare Deptt., GoO mentioned regarding continuance of hard billing in addition to the present initiative of on-line billing and digital payment. He wanted to advise consumers to take advantage of the call centres and digital payment mechanism. The Chairperson advised him to discuss with the concerned DISCOMs.
2. Shri Sambit Parija, FA-cum-Addl. Secretary, Deptt. of Energy, GoO stated that AT&C losses are declining and DISCOMs started making profit. He advised to create more awareness programmes on the electricity safety in Odia language to reduce the fatalities/causality to both human and animals. He suggested to increase the compensation level for such fatal accidents. DISCOMs have created Depreciation Fund which can be utilized for non-remunerative Capex Schemes. Revision of Standards of Performance (SoP) Regulations may be framed incorporating the revision of Electricity Rules by the Ministry of Power (MoP).
3. Shri R.N. Nayak said that all DISCOMs are doing well. However, natural calamity has increased in Odisha, particularly in coastal areas. Therefore, Insurance/Self-insurance should be made and some revenue should be earmarked for Natural Calamity Insurance Fund (instead of always depending on Govt.) to take care of revival of large scale damaged to the Distribution Network. For transmission, normally 0.5% of asset value is taken for such insurance. Large scale industrialization in Jajpur and other area needs implementation of power quality norms starting with few specified parameters. He advised for separate budget allocation towards consumer awareness including safety and compensation for fatal accidents (public/animal). He enquired the DISCOMs regarding recovery of Rs.5000 to 6000 spent on each Smart Meter. Benefits of such smart meters should be intimated to the consumers. Regarding replacement of existing meters with Smart Meters, he advised that the programme should start with consumers with billing of 300 unit or more per month.

Prioritization of investment/expenditure should be made especially for 11 kV feeders of 100 to 300 Kms. long with emphasis on improvement of voltage in Rural area. There should be timeline for such programme with additional fund for such 11 kV lines, which can

- be monitored. Indexing of lines and sub-stations should be made taking consumer density into account, like no. of consumers per 33 kV line & per PSS.
4. Shri N.N. Mishra said that T&D loss and AT&C loss should be mapped separately. Technical loss will be limited, whereas Commercial loss has no limit. Reduction in commercial loss must be monitored. Load flow study should be done for the entire system for all locations at regular intervals as it is an ongoing process. Such study will help to reduce failures of DTRs and other components, which will benefit consumers. Regarding Kalbaisakhi/Cyclones, he suggested that mapping of such learning should be done over a couple of years considering how many consumers were affected and how quickly the outages were restored and plan & invest accordingly to minimize damages. Since consumer always requests for zero time in the restoration of power supply, the learning from mapping across all DISCOMs starting with last year outage will help to plan additional resources for future years.
 5. Prof. A.K. Tripathy started with a remark on the presentation of the DISCOMs that they have taken good initiatives. He mentioned about power quality and desired to assess where we were 5 years back and where do we stand now. No longer these presentations will be valid after 2 to 3 years. The analysis should be on achievements and improvement over previous years, where targets have been exceeded and where initiatives like harmonic measurement, DSTATCOM, DVR, Auto-recloser etc. has been introduced. Addition/replacement of equipment/meters etc. are normal routine works of any DISCOM. Benchmarking of power quality with respect to baseline (bottom line) should show what has been achieved. Maintenance and paintings of lines and sub-stations carried out utilising Capex are routine works of DISCOMs. Rural population, which constitutes 70% of consumer base, will not be happy about use of drones for meter reading. They expect quality power at low cost and reduction in interruptions/down time. There is no visible change in field in terms of number of interruptions which is same as it was earlier. There should be bifurcation of technical and commercial loss to understand the improvement on loss reduction. The bottom line should be raised, constraints on achievement to be highlighted as to investment under Capex to strengthen the distribution system. The performance of DISCOMs should not only be in book of records, but it should include timeline for addressing the basic issues of consumers like low voltage problem, availability of power, metering & billing related issues etc.
 6. Shri B.K. Mohapatra stated that when 83% consumers are in Rural area, whether this digital move would help them. Replacement of transformers in Rural area with higher capacity for better voltage profile should be given priority. There should be 5 years guarantee where Smart Meters are installed. DISCOM should bear the cost of the meter as it will increase

their revenue. The burden should not be passed on to poor consumers. Interruptions in Rural area is not coming down although lot of investment is being made by the Government and also by DISCOMs under Capex. It is essential for Government to conduct audit on Government Capex. Strict monitoring by the Commission on consumer complaints is not in place and hence many cases are filed in GRFs. Commission should be strict on implementation of Rules and Regulations. Monitoring Committee which used to know the field reality, should be reconstituted. Licensee should organise bi-monthly interactions and discussion with consumers at JE to SE level. They should display Consumers' Rights at prominent place as many of them are Rural consumers. SDO office to display the losses in their Sub-Division. There is poor participation of consumers in the affairs of DISCOMs in form of interaction meetings except participating through SAC members. GRF should not function as an organisation of the Licensee. It should be independent. SAC should discuss all subject matter of DISCOM and more meetings of SAC on different subject matters, if required, should be organised. Commission may suggest Licensee to purchase the meter without charging the meter rent to the consumers. All disputes relating to meter will be resolved, if cost of meter is covered in tariff. All stakeholders to take part in the affairs of consumers to encourage consumer literacy.

7. Shri P.K. Pradhan stated that there is increase in HT consumption, but AT&C loss in LT level is still high. In many cases, normal shut-downs take 2 to 3 hrs. Again, for different purposes, separate shut-downs are being taken instead of attending all the problems in one longer shut-down. Therefore, planned maintenance is required. Regarding safety issue, people are engaged in field without a valid license from Electrical Licensing Board, Odisha (ELBO). This is like driving vehicles without driving license. There should be guaranteed Capex especially earmarked for reduction of AT&C loss. The Capital Investment made by Govt. of Odisha should be part of the total Capex approved for investment during the relevant period. The licensees have collected Rs.250 crores by installation of digital meters, because of which common people feel that these meters record higher than the normal digital meter. As per Regulation, the meter rent is already collected from the consumers for the life of the meter. Now people are complaining that why the licensees are collecting meter rent on replacement of their good running meters. Replacement of such meter has no meaning. It is better to go for replacement of defective meters, since they are not able to find resolution of disputes arising out of such replacement where they take a longer time to serve bills as per meter reading. There should not be average billing for a longer period after replacement with new meter rather than serving bills as per meter reading. Replacement of working meters with Smart Meter is not advisable. Additional security deposit should not be imposed

without documentation of enhancement in the contract/connected load. The safety of workers of DISCOMs should be emphasized to reduce fatal accidents.

8. Shri Prabhakar Dora sent request for leave of absence as well as his views/advice. In his communication he has mentioned about licensees' failure to comply the Standards of Performance (SoP) on power supply as notified by the Commission.
9. Shri Girish Chandra Mohapatra said that awareness among people on safety measures in electricity supply should be ensured by the Licensees. The Business Associates (BA) of the Licensees very often employ people in the field without proper education on such safety measures to work in the electricity sector. There should be enough insurance coverage for such illiterate people working at ground level, as they are more susceptible to accidents. Their families should get compensation of at least Rs.20 to 25 lakhs through insurance coverage in addition to the compensation granted under Workmen's Compensation Act. He also made a mention of rampant unscheduled load-shedding in all areas of Rourkela.
10. Smt. Saishree Pattnaik stated that in spite of charging of 220/132 kV Grid Sub-Station of OPTCL at Gandia, people suffer from low voltage problem in Gandia area of Dhenkanal district because of no connectivity of this Grid Sub-Station with TPCODL's Primary Sub-Station (PSS). The Commission may instruct the licensee to look into the matter. She made a specific mention about average billing in Parjang – Patrapada area and no bills were served as per meter reading. Hence, one consumer got a bill as high as Rs.1,68,000/- after one year, which becomes very difficult for the consumer to pay. Such situation should not be repeated for other consumers. In another case, she mentioned that meter of a consumer is not being replaced even after one year of request. DISCOM should provide basic facility for proper functioning of GRF like office with separate wash room for male & female, waiting room etc. She emphasized on the revision of estimate for elephant corridor to be expedited to avoid delay in the normal process.

In response to her requests, the Chairperson advised DISCOMs to delegate power to SDO and JE level officers, so that consumers should not suffer for long time due to delay in replacement of defective meters.

11. Smt. Abanti Behera stated that DISCOMs should emphasize on implementation of targets set by it. In Kendrapara area, there are no sincere and experienced staff to guide lower staff for quick resolution of fuse off calls and other services to the consumers. The DISCOMs take longer time for reflection of load enhancement in the bills for which consumer finds difficulty in making payment of huge outstanding dues. Many of DSS are found without safety fencing.

The Chairperson brought to the knowledge of all the Members that substantial works under Capex as per the Vesting Order will be completed before next summer. Then the frequent power-cut/load shedding will be reduced to a great extent. At present, 30 to 40% of works under Capex has been capitalized. WAPCOS has been engaged as Third Party Auditor to verify the real progress (both physical and financial) of work in the field by four DISCOMs. By March, 2024 metering of all DTRs will be completed. Thereafter energy audit will be done within another 7 to 8 months. New connections will be released on-line. JE (Commerce) to be appointed in each Section.

12. Shri Shiba Dutta Bhanja said that time-bound action should be taken for the awareness of Rural consumers and multi-language Booklet regarding the benefit of Smart Meter with DOs and DON'Ts should be circulated among all consumers. The duration of availability of power in rural area has not improved appreciably.
13. Prof. Prakash Kumar Hota stated that minimum Standards of Performance (SoP) should be displayed in a prominent place in every field office of the Licensee. SoP should include power quality, voltage level and power quality in terms of normative Total Harmonic Distortion (THD) vis-à-vis International THD norms. Number of meter replacement and other parameters like release of new connections every month should also be displayed. It is observed that most of the time the Load-Generation balance is not achieved. Smart Meters will help in management of peak-load and Load-Generation balancing. Real benefit of Smart Meters can be achieved with dynamic price mechanism like Time of the Day (ToD) Tariff, which can be for two to three different time spans in a day. ToD Tariff can be extended to high end domestic consumers.
14. Shri Bibhu Charan Swain stated that Hybrid mode of hearing should be introduced in GRF and Ombudsman offices to save expenses on the part of consumers in terms of travel time and cost. The staff working in GRF and Ombudsman offices on contractual basis should be regularized for better motivation to work. While sourcing different equipment and materials under Capex, the technical specification and commercial terms should accommodate MSME suppliers of Odisha. Over the years momentary interruptions have increased. Different social media like twitter may be used for escalation of grievances of consumers. Audit of each Division should be conducted in line with the SoP Regulation. While determining the tariff, the Commission has taken proactive steps to reduce the tariff of agricultural activity like Cold-storage. The Commission may take review of DISCOMs for popularization of various activities /initiatives of DISCOM for consumers since they have not done much under KUSUM-C scheme. While monitoring the Capex, SAC members may also be involved in other activities relating to the sector like Rules of GoI, formulation of Regulations etc.

Special care should be taken by DISCOMs for reliable power supply to Data Centres with alternate source of supply in case of failure of the main supply. DISCOMs should create a team like ODRAF for disaster management as well as creation of separate fund for this purpose. There should be debate on increase in frequency of SAC meetings to discuss new Policy and Electricity Rules notified by Ministry of Power (MoP). The performance data of the state of Odisha is not reflected in National Portal - only 20% information is submitted within time schedule and 80% information is beyond the time.

15. Shri Bidyadhar Mohanty said that the DISCOMs are highlighting their performance achievements and good initiatives being taken at different levels. But, at present 5 to 6 hours of power-cut is observed in Urban areas and 10 to 12 hours in Rural areas. Most of the grievances of consumers are not being addressed by TPNODL, although the complaints under Reg.97,114 and 115 are legitimate. In such cases, they continue to bill on the basis of average meter reading under Reg.155 for the past 3 billing cycles for a longer period without resolution of the disputes. There is no power supply under SOUBHAGYA Yojana, but they continue to bill the 60,000 or more consumers. In such case, Commission may engage Monitoring Committee of SAC to look into the matter. He expressed his happiness over monitoring the performance of DISCOMs by engaging Directors of OERC.
16. Shri Surendra Prasad Mallick stated that in case of replacement of meter, no meter rent should be charged where the consumer has already paid the full cost of the meter provided by the Licensee/Supplier and meter is running with OK status, hence Reg.113 (v) may be amended as such. The replacement of OK meters without giving reasons is not correct. In case of defective meter, the revision of bills should be limited to 3 months, as the Licensee is supposed to replace the meter within 3 months. Hence, Reg.155 needs to be amended. In case of suppressed reading, the liability is with licensee because the meter reader is engaged by the Licensee and the deficiency of his service (in not taking of correct meter reading) should not be thrust upon the consumer. Monthly electricity bill (both for EC & Demand charge) may be calculated on prorata day-wise basis for the benefit of both the licensee and the consumer as it is noticed that the billing is made for 27 to 33 days.
17. Shri Alekh Chandra Mallik said that more and more emphasis is to be given on development of Hydro power. Small Hydro Power Plants should be installed in the main river. The nuclear power plant with smaller capacity may be introduced. Regarding evacuation of power from Darlipalli, he mentioned that transmission charges are going up. Own transmission lines should be set up so also back-up transmission line for NTPC-Kaniha power. Complaint management system of DISCOM is faulty. JE should be given power for resolution of such complaints. The delay in restoration of power supply in village area is very common. This

is because of delayed response of the DISCOMs to the complaints of consumers. Capex investment by State Govt. should be reflected in the equity shares of Govt. of Odisha. DISCOMs can earn revenue from trading by better management of Hydro and buying cheaper power from Energy Exchanges.

18. Shri Trilochan Panda, MD, GRIDCO informed that the DISCOMs have already invested 50% of committed Capex as per Vesting order. Hence integrated planning is required for such Capex. Long term resource adequacy plan should be done for the next 25 years. For OPTCL, constraint in transmission system (lines and sub-stations) should be taken up in system study (as an ongoing process) in matching with the requirement of distribution system of DISCOMs.
19. Shri Amit Garg, CEO, TPSODL informed that they have shared the documents on Smart Meter including DOs and DON'Ts for the consumer.

In response, the Chairperson advised that guidelines on installation and benefit of Smart Meter should be published in Odia language.

Shri S.K. Ray Mohapatra, Member, OERC stated that a consumer spread in DISCOM's operating area varies from 45/Sq.Km. to about 105/Sq.Km. and highlighted about steps being taken by the Commission for improvement/upgradation/modernization of DISCOMs through Capex investment, Govt. support post-vesting as under:

- Emphasis on System strengthening of distribution network based on Load Flow Study by all four (4) DISCOMs
- Co-ordination between OPTCL and DISCOMs for better utilization of GSS and PSS to resolve the Low Voltage issue
- Investment under Capex for strengthening & expansion of Distribution network to avoid overloading of feeders, PTRs & DTRs and low voltage issue etc.
- Removal of Group controller of feeders at 33 kV & 11 kV level in stages to improve reliability of power supply
- Reducing SAIDI & SAIFI
- Steps to be taken for reduction in fatal accidents.
- Emphasis on improvement of Earthing in PSS & DSS & Towers/Poles
- CAIDI is proposed to be introduced in addition to SAIFI and SAIDI
- Installation of Smart Meters in Govt. establishments, high-end 3 phase consumers and willing consumers in initial phase.
- 70% metering & billing related issues can be resolved through Smart Meters

- Emphasis on Energy Audit
- Steps for metering of all DTRs for energy audit to segregate commercial loss
- Emphasis on development of Cyclone resilient Distribution Infrastructure system
- Redundancy for 33 kV incomer and PTRs
- Emphasis on Standardization of transformers (both PTRs and DTRs) and MVA capacity of PSS and following Standard specification across the DISCOMs.

Shri Antaryami Sahoo, Secretary concluded the meeting with a vote of thanks to the Chairperson and Members of SAC, Special Invitees and all other participants.


(Suresh Chandra Mahapatra)
Chairperson