

IT Initiatives

in Power Distribution of Andhra Pradesh

-A study on Consumer Services



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Introduction:

- Electricity is a key ingredient for both economic and social development.
- When the electrification is in nascent and growth stages wherein the thrust is most on electrifying more and more Villages / Hamlets and bring them into the service of electricity supply.
- up on achievement of 100% electrification of all villages the thrust has shifted to System improvement & Strengthening there by delivering good quality power to the consumers.
- Easy accessibility of quality and required quantity of power is becoming prerequisite for development of the mankind.

Growth of Power Sector in Andhra Pradesh

Financil Year	Installed Capacity (MW)	Energy Production & Purchase (MU)	No. of Consumers (Lakhs)
1980-81	2303	7378	23.82
1990-91	4902	21103	65.98
2000-01	7974	42844	132.94
2001-02	9056	46951	140.73
2002-03	10328	47937	148.09
2003-04	10696	47444	157.77
2004-05	11106	51123	165.48
2005-06	11151	52575	173.21

Objectives of the Paper.

- ✓ To highlight the consumer service initiatives taken up by the power utilities in the state of Andhra Pradesh in the post reforms era.
- ✓ **Information Technology is being used in a big way to harness the benefits of it for better and effective operations and consumer service in the power utilities.**

Status of Power Sector Reforms in AP.

- ✓ Andhra Pradesh Power Sector reforms act enacted in the year 1998
- ✓ APSEB unbundled into TRANSCO & GENCO in the year 1999.
- ✓ APERC constituted in the year 1999
- ✓ Four Distribution Companies viz **APEPDCL, APSPDCL, APCPDCL and APNPDCL** were formed and functioning from FY 2000-01.
- ✓ APERC issuing Tariff Orders regularly for the past 8 Years.
- ✓ Provisions of Electricity Act 03 are strictly implemented.
- ✓ Each distribution company set up Consumer Grievances Redressal Forums (CGRF)
- ✓ APERC appointed VIDYUTH OMBUDSMAN
- ✓ Bulk Power Purchase activity transferred to DISCOMs by way of transferring Power Purchase Agreements with DISCOMs
- ✓ All the utilities are earning profits.

Impact of Reforms on Consumer service.

- ✓ Due to unbundling of the power Industry and the consequent formation of the distribution companies, **the new entities have been able to focus more on the consumer service within their jurisdictions and have taken up many initiatives for improvement.**
- ✓ Power Sector reforms have definitely exerted positive impact on the consumer service levels and the positive results are coming on account of the combined efforts of the utilities and regulators and Government in this regard.

Employing Information Technology in different functions of Power Distribution

- **The ability of the information systems to retrieve the required information from the electronic records within no time finds a very good application in Power Supply/Distribution sector in rendering better consumer service.**
- Improvements in technology both in Hardware and Software coupled with technological advancements in Telecom are coming very handy for deployment of IT Systems for better consumer service

Necessity for better Consumer Service

- The consumer is exposed to the global economies because of liberalization and globalization and getting aware of quality of life and services in the other parts of the globe as well as improved service levels in many other sectors, particularly in service sectors such as Telecom, Banking, Insurance, Medical etc touching up on his daily life, **the expectation levels from Power Sector which is also a service sector are becoming high day by day.**

Consumer Service Initiatives Consequent to Power Sector Reforms in Andhra Pradesh

The four Power Distribution Companies in Andhra Pradesh **have released the Citizens' Charter in the year 2002** wherein they have publicly provided assurance to the consumers with regard to various utility services as mentioned below.

- Restoration of Power Supply
- Quality of Power Supply
- Metering Problems
- Billing discrepancies
- Release of New Service Connections
- Transfer and Conversion of Services
- Disconnection & Re connection of Power Supply
- Implementation of Scheduled Outages

Highlights of Consumer Service Initiatives taken up in Power Sector of Andhra Pradesh

- Establishment of Customer Call Centers and Service Centers at all the Cities, Municipal Towns and Semi Urban areas.
- In Municipal Towns and Cities these Call Centers work round the clock
- Spot Billing was introduced for all the Low Tension consumers across the state since July 2002.
- Multiple bill payment options introduced contrary to the earlier practice of payment at Electricity Revenue Office counters.
- Payment of Electricity Bills through e Seva. (A state Govt promoted centers undertaking payment of all kind of citizen services bills) centers
- Payment of electricity bills through Banks
- Payment of Electricity Bills through Cheque Drop Boxes
- Electronic Clearing via Bank Accounts
- Payment through SMS
- Payment through Credit Cards

Highlights of Consumer Service Initiatives taken up in Power Sector of Andhra Pradesh.. Contd.....

- Operation of Call Centers is totally outsourced to have the independence in operation and monitoring.
- Proven software is installed and the tracking and monitoring is systematically done.
- Compliance monitoring with respect to the standards of performance prescribed by the Hon'ble APERC is done on a periodical basis and appropriate action is taken in case of deviations.
- Taking of feedback from the consumers up on redressal of the complaint.
- Third party verification of the service level rendered to the consumers.
- Conducting of Vidyuth Adalaths at section offices every Monday, there by on the spot disposal of complaints is undertaken.
- Vide publicity is given to increase the awareness in public on the services provided by the utility.

Standards of Performance Regulation

- The Andhra Pradesh Electricity Regulatory Commission issued Standards of Performance Regulation in the Year 2004 (*In fact the utilities are implementing a citizen's charter from the year 2002 onwards*) in pursuant to the relevant clauses of the Electricity Act 03 to be adhered to by the Distribution Companies.
- The Standards of Performance Regulation **guarantee certain time frames within which the consumer complaints would be redressed.**
- The Distribution Licensees **shall have to pay the specified compensation** in case of default.
- It is learnt that the APEPDCL has already paid a compensation of about Rs 2 Lakhs for about 90 Consumers during the FY 2006-07

List of Services covered in the Regulation

- Normal Fuse Offs
- Overhead Line / cable Breakdowns
- Underground cable breakdowns
- Distribution Transformer Failures
- Period of Scheduled outage
- Voltage Fluctuations
- Meter Complaints
- Applications for new connection/additional load
- Transfer of ownership & conversion of services
- Resolution of Complaints on consumer's bills
- Reconnection of supply following disconnection due to non payment of bills.

Conclusion

- Today Power Sector Reforms are playing an important role in rendering quality power and better consumer services.
- This is particularly true in the case of **Andhra Pradesh**. Utilities are taking lot of initiatives that include IT oriented, Improvement of Power Quality, Interacting with the consumer, Motivating the Line Staff etc.
- In the post reforms scenario power utilities are working with changing mindsets and the **electricity is treated as a good rather than service**.

Conclusion. Contd...

- The utilities need to concentrate more on reduction of Transmission & Distribution Losses (T&D Losses) which are around 20% as of now to below 15%.
- The gains on account of loss reduction would directly accrue as following financial gains.
 - Postponing of the Investments in upstream Generation & Transmission.
 - Reduction in Power Purchase Costs
 - Sustainable lower tariffs in future.
- **Utilities don't need to be complacent and shall need to take and explore lot of initiatives continuously to win the hearts of the consumers.**
- **This is particularly important, in the competitive world, which is likely to onset in the power distribution sector also.**

THANK YOU