

MINUTES OF 37th MEETING OF STATE ADVISORY COMMITTEE
(SAC) OF OERC HELD ON 01.03.2025 AT 11:00 HRS
THROUGH VIDEO CONFERENCE

PRESENT:

1. Representative of Department of Energy, Government of Odisha.
2. Sri N. N. Mishra, Ex-Director (Operation), NTPC, M 17 B, Samsara, Sector-60, Gurugram-122101
3. Prof. Ashok Kumar Tripathy, Former D.G., CPRI, HIG-213, Kanan Vihar Phase-1, BBSR-31
4. Sri B.K. Mohapatra, representative of UCCI, Rajabagicha, Cuttack
5. Sri Prasanta Kumar Pradhan, Ex- Director (Comm.), GRIDCO, Nua Road, VSS Nagar, Ward No.9, Bargarh-768028
6. Sri Prabhakar Dora, Consumer Activist, 3rd Lane, Vidya Nagar (Co-operative Colony), PO/Dist.- Rayagada-765001
7. Sri Girish Chandra Mohapatra, Advocate, MM-6, Civil Township, Rourkela,
8. Smt. Saishree Patnaik, Advocate & Notary, Panel Lawyer Juvenile Justice Board, Dhenkanal, At-Kunjakanta, PO/Dist-Dhenkanal.
9. Smt. Abanti Behera, W/o Randhir Jena, At-Kakat, PO-Kendrapara, Dist-Kendrapara.
10. Sri Shiva Dutta Bhanja, Ex-GM, NESCO, Flat No-811, ARCON Retreat Apartment, Patia Square, Nandankanan Road, Bhubaneswar - 751031
11. Sri Bibhu Charan Swain, Sr. Consultant, Power Tech Consultants, Kalinga Nagar, Bhubaneswar
12. Sri Bimal Krushna Mishra, S72, Maitree Vihar, Bhubaneswar-751023
13. Sri Bidyadhar Mohanty, President of Labour Union, INTUC, Jajpur, At/PO-Chorda, Jajpur Road-755019
14. Sri Alekh Chandra Mallik, Ex-Director (Comm.), GRIDCO, 335, City Garden, Raghunathpur, Bhubaneswar-751024
15. Sri Bimal Das, Representative of Confederation of Citizen Association, Bhubaneswar
16. Sri Debabrata Pattanayak, Lesancy Complex, Ward No.15, Rairangpur, Dist. Mayurbhanj-757043
17. Sri Gour Chandra Panda, President, Bhadrak Chamber of Commerce, At/P.O. Usha Vikas, Charampa, Bhadrak-756100

INTRODUCTORY:

The 37th State Advisory Committee Meeting was convened on 01.03.2025 at 11.00 AM through video conferencing to discuss on ARR & Tariff proposals of different Power Utilities for ensuing FY 2025-26. Sri Gajendra Mohapatra, Officiating Chairperson and Sri S.K. Ray Mohapatra, Member, SAC Members, Senior Officials of the Commission and the heads of GRIDCO, OPTCL, SLDC, all State Generating companies and DISCOMs were present in the meeting. The SAC Members Sri R.N.Nayak, Prof. (Dr.) Prakash Kumar Hota, Sri Sanjib Kumar Tripathy, Sri Surendra Prasad Mallick and Sri Burle Balaraju were absent in the meeting.

SUMMARY OF THE PROCEEDINGS:

Secretary, OERC welcomed Chairperson, Member of the Commission, SAC Members and all the participants present in the meeting. The Chairperson of the Commission chaired the proceedings and expressed thanks to the SAC Members for sparing their valuable time to participate in the tariff proceeding for the FY 2025-26. He invited the Consumer Counsel, WISE, Pune, who presented a brief analysis of the ARR & Tariff proposals of the intra-state Licensees and the Generating Companies for the FY 2025-26 including past trueing up applications. The Chairperson then requested the SAC Members for their valuable comments/ suggestions, which are summarized as under:

1. **Shi N. N. Mishra** stated that the Design Energy of the OHPC generators should be tracked annually and in case of any deficit which requires capital investment, should be taken care of. This would help in availing the benefit of the actual design energy considering it's the cheapest electricity available. In case of OPGC, the Variable Cost (VC) should be directly linked with the fuel cost. If there is no increase in fuel cost, the VC should not increase and any requirement of marginal increase in VC should be taken care of by efficiency improvement programs. He put forward his thoughts about high employee cost in OPTCL which might be because of legacy issue. He requested the Commission to prepare a roadmap for gradual reduction of the employee cost of OPTCL. He pointed out that the power purchase cost is a dynamic exercise so as to procure the optimum power at least cost and therefore it should be a continuous online affair. He stated that the additional power requirement should be the only cost that should be added annually to the costs of previous FY. The Gap between the revenue and expenses of DISCOMs, should be zero/ minimized, year after year, by exploring/ adopting various technical and non-technical means instead of burdening the consumer.
2. **Shri Ashok Kumar Tripathy** stated that Licensees are making same proposals every year and therefore, the Commission should give them a clear direction of the intention and expectation of the Commission from the Licensees. Necessary optimization must be done to manage the expenses within the approval of the Commission. He agreed with the DISCOM's proposals of waiving meter rent, use of security deposit, solar hours rebate, special tariff and TPA scheme with CGPs. He emphasized that we have huge CGPs capacity and the interchange of power at the times of need would help GRIDCO in balancing power during shortage and surplus periods. The DISCOMs are presenting their Collection efficiency as 99% while their billing efficiency is not improving as per expectation. The thrust of Smart meters has not improved and some people are unhappy with the software that is being used. GRIDCO has submitted that Rs. 6500 Crs arrear is yet to be recovered, but the audited figures are different and the same should not be put in the ARR application without verification. Further, the DISCOMs have been given mandates for arrear collection. They have limitations and also they have found certain facts that needs to be looked into. For improving the plant availability, the expenditure required to be done should be given in CAPEX. Maintenance cost is increasing along with asset cost, for an electrical system, the maintenance cost should reduce with system stabilization. Considering outsourcing of maintenance, it should be optimized else the efficiency would suffer. He agreed with the view of Sri Mishra regarding high employee cost in OPTCL. He suggested for cost based tariff on rolling basis so that tariff would change from quarter to quarter based on power scenarios, thereby boosting the consumer confidence in the DISCOMs. The increase in costs due to inflation should be compensated to some extent through initiatives like digitization, improved efficiency, intelligent trading and use of improved software. He suggested for conducting intra regulatory meetings to access the expenditure approved to the licensees and also to check if any activity proposed by the licensees is being repeated during approvals.
3. **Sri B.K.Mohapatra** expressed his views on the tariff rationalization measures proposed by the Licensees. He disapproved Imposition of Delay Payment Surcharge (DPS) as in the current regulatory setup, non-payment of bills for 2 months would lead to disconnection of supply and by this there would not be any accumulation of arrear. Pro-rata billing is also to be discouraged and the defective meters should be replaced immediately. Regarding Smart Meter proposal, he suggested that in case of a working meter for which meter

rent has been completely paid, there should not be further meter rent for replacement with new Smart Meter. With Smart Meters, there is no provision of providing rebate and giving disconnection notice, which is required as per regulatory provisions. He welcomed the proposal of Licensees for Creation of Contingency Reserve as long as it does not affect the tariff and suggested that such funds should be created by DISCOM's resources. He discouraged the collection of arrears by the new DISCOMs which does not belong to their period and this would avoid unnecessary litigations.

4. **Sri P.K.Pradhan** requested the Commission to discuss the matter of Hirakud Power House with Department of Energy and Department of Water Resources (DOWR), GoO, regarding the reason behind not permitting the reservoir level to go below 600 ft. As a result of this, the full utilisation of the water is not happening. Discussing OPTCL's ARR application, he mentioned that OPTCL has not taken into account the transmission charges received against the energy traded by GRIDCO and the energy that is transacted in IEX. Regarding GRIDCO's RPO obligation, he suggested that GRIDCO should explore availability of wind energy so that such cheaper RE power can be used during peak hours in the evening. He agreed with the views of Sri Mishra regarding linking the Variable Cost with the cost of the fuel. He then submitted his observations on the DISCOM's ARR & Tariff proposals. He said that the outsourcing cost is too high and is not at all optimized. The number of people and vehicles engaged by DISCOMs are very high. He mentioned that the people of the state have reservation against the use of Smart Meters. Therefore, 5 meters in every 1000 meters may be tested in the Government Testing Laboratory. Further, the Industrial tariff should be such that the industries are encouraged not to procure power through Open Access during day time when GRIDCO is having surplus power. He raised his concern citing that the new Industries are not able to use the remunerative scheme, while they are actually asked to do all the works themselves for uptake of power supply. Stringent directions must be there in this regard. He proposed to raise the e-bill rebate to Rs. 30 per month and after 2-3 years, this facility may be withdrawn after all the consumers have come under the digital fold.
5. **Sri Prabhakar Dora** raised his concern that the Electricity Consumers Rules, 2020 has not been implemented completely in the state of Odisha. In line with the Standard of Performance Regulations, no compensation has been given to the consumers since 2004 when the standards are not being complied by the DISCOMs. He intimated that he has been writing letters about various issues to the Distribution Licensee for last two years but he has never received a reply in return from the DISCOMs, even after a letter of direction has been issued by the Energy Department, Government of Odisha in this regard. He raised his concern that the advice of an SAC Member is being taken very lightly by the DISCOMs. Citing other issues, he said that the DISCOMs are approaching High Court by misinterpreting regulations against the Consumers. He emphasized that the general consumers are not able to appoint counsel or run to High Court for these matters while the Act has established the Regulatory Commissions for this purpose to address the issues of the consumers.
6. **Sri Girish Chandra Mohapatra** submitted that there should be reduction of tariff for agricultural and domestic consumers since the audit report of the DISCOMs show profit. He suggested that the Regulation 155 of OERC Supply code restricts the Bill revision beyond 2 years which should not be there. He mentioned the fact that, as a member of the GRF, he has seen cases where there is legitimate requirement of bill revision beyond 2 years. He further suggested that the cost of the meter should be borne by the DISCOMs. The VNM mechanism for use of solar power should be extended in favor of Hospitals, Hotels, Nursing Homes & Educational Institutes. The penalty assessment by the DISCOMs is very arbitrary and enforcement team should not harass the consumers. Billing should be done with proper metering. Before vigilance checking, disconnection should be done with prior notice. Legal standard and knowledge of the consumers should be developed since there would not be any benefit if people are unable to exercise their rights even though provisions are made.

7. **Smt. Saishree Patnaik** suggested that considering the financial position of the people of the state, there should not be any tariff rise. She raised her concern that the new connection charges are higher than before. She mentioned that the new DISCOMs took over the responsibility with many promises which they have not fulfilled. Rather they have only been increasing their own expenses. The enforcement teams of the DISCOMs should work properly and should not burden the innocent consumers with unnecessary penalties. She insisted that the DISCOMs should take action for Electric Vehicles (EVs) charging points and easy access points for consumers to charge their EV vehicles. She stated the fact that the DISCOMs have no control on the outsourced employees and there have been instances where outsourced employees quit their jobs when they commit mistakes and are free from the liabilities of their fault.
8. **Smt. Abanti Behera** requested the Commission to conduct SAC meetings regularly. She stated that there is no accountability and no audit of the enforcement activities that are being conducted by the DISCOMs. Therefore, to discourage illegitimate penalties, a mechanism may be framed under the purview of the Commission. She emphasized that when action is taken under Section 126 and 135, proper procedure should be followed. Further the DISCOMs have not been able to supply quality power. The reduction in AT&C losses is also not as per expectation. She requested that the tariff should not be increased in the ensuing financial year.
9. **Sri Shiba Dutta Bhanja** highlighted that TPCODL and TPNODL have projected more energy sales at HT & EHT level as compared to LT level and at the same time have shown GAP in their ARR estimates, implying more expenses than revenue collection. He suggested that they need to cut down their expenses and optimize the resources. He showed his agreement with the proposal of the DISCOMs for having a minimum CD for industries having CGPs, since these industries utilize all the resources of the state for their benefit. He proposed the Commission to take initiatives for encouraging use of solar power. Regarding enforcement activities of the DISCOMs, he mentioned that they are not filling FIRs for theft of power. Further he appreciated that the DISCOMs have taken initiatives and brought changes in the Distribution sector.
10. **Sri Bibhu Charan Swain** stated that he has represented the MSMEs and other Industries during the ARR hearings of the DISCOMs and his submissions during those proceedings may also be accepted as his submissions for the SAC meeting. He suggested that a state PSU must take up the initiative for developing the RE projects of the state like pumped storage, floating solar, battery storage etc. A subsidiary of OPGC may be formed in SPV model to take up such activities. The micro hydro power plants that are in defunct state may be revived by signing of PPA between OPGC and GRIDCO. The stranded generators whose PPAs has expired but have useful life left, may be taken into consideration. In case of OPTCL, the transmission loss has varies from 1.67% to 3% on month to month basis. Therefore, an optimistic challenge may be given to OPTCL for loss reduction. He suggested that third party audit of transmission loss may be conducted. OPTCL must facilitate power supply to areas which are assigned as industrial parks by IPICOL and frequency of GCC meetings must be increased for proper coordination between OPTCL and DISCOMs. He disagreed with the DISCOMs proposal for utilisation of Security Deposit as Working capital but agreed with the proposal for installing Smart Meters, provided it is completely financed from banks. He suggested that CAPEX Regulation may be framed according to which the proposals of OPTCL and DISCOMs may be submitted by them. He requested the Commission to fix a tariff at which DISCOM can directly purchase the power from small CGPs or generators at 33kV and 11 kV level. He requested the Commission for re-introduction of OTS scheme. The Licensee conditions are very liberal in the Vesting Order and needs to be realigned with the Conduct of Business Regulations, 2004. He further stressed that a committee of SAC Members (technical and legal) may be formed which can look into some of the enforcement drives and submit a report to the Commission. He requested to enhance the ToD benefit upto 50 paise so that solar power can be harnessed. Some kind of intra

state exchange may be formed so that carbon trading and power trading can be done. He raised his concern regarding reduction in transaction quantum under open access, which is not a good sign for competition. The HT loss has decreased and so the normative HT loss may either be reduced from 8% or actual HT loss may be considered. With various measures and schemes, the DISCOMs have made profit, and he suggested that one third of the profit should be adjusted in ARR and another one-third may be used for regulatory purpose and this would reduce the tariff burden on consumer.

11. **Sri Bimal Krushna Mishra** submitted that there has been qualitative improvement of the power supply in the state. There is dissatisfaction among the consumers and resistance for Smart meters which can be addressed by creating awareness. SAC Members may be involved in Consumer awareness drive, if required. He stated that large quantity of Green Ammonia and Green Hydrogen will be manufactured/ produced in the state for which huge quantum of RE power would be required. Feasibility of development of wind power should be explored. Small wind turbines have been designed for domestic rooftop and such installations can improve the RE power quantum of the state. Increased use of RE power and use of open access should be encouraged. He also requested for no increase in tariff of the consumers.
12. **Sri Bidyadhar Mohanty** expressed that the DISCOMs are not following the proper billing process. He stated that in TPNODL area, there is still continuous power cut and low voltage issue. The officers stationed at one place for more than 10 years are not being transferred and some officers do not behave properly with the consumers. He further said that since the losses have been reduced, no tariff hike is required. He rejected the proposal regarding Smart meters installation and stated that Roof Top solar installations should be done by the consumers. He raised the question of regularizing the outsourced employees who have been working for more than 10/15 years. He suggested for imposing penalty on DISCOM officers in cases where they do not comply the GRF's orders. Further, the disconnection of power supply should always be as per regulations.
13. **Sri Alekh Chandra Mallick** submitted that because of low PLF of OPGC, Government of India has allowed 6% blending of imported coal and blending upto 4% was allowed till Oct'2024. But GRIDCO and OPGC have not responded in this regard. Further, he mentioned that in anticipation of upcoming Tata Steel plant, the Narendrapur substation was upgraded from 40 MVA to 320 MVA. But the said plant never materialised and OPTCL had to bear a heavy loss. He suggested that the existing area of the old plant should be used for the new Talcher Thermal Power Plant by NTPC. He mentioned that there will be requirement of huge RE power for Green Ammonia & Green Hydrogen and there is no information if the new plants coming up at Gopalpur would be having their own RE plant. He insisted that load flow diagrams and system study should be in place for all the new projects. He suggested that the issues that are not resolved in the Assembly may be discussed with technical experts to resolve the issue. He stressed that the quality of power supply has not improved in the state. Independent Testing labs other than that of the Licensees, must be there for testing of Smart Meters. The DISCOMS should adhere to their schedule and should pay penalty for under drawal (deviation). He suggested that reduction in BSP should be tagged with reduction in RST.
14. **Sri Bimal Das** suggested that SAC Members may be issued I-cards for their identification. He mentioned that he was a part of a fact-finding committee and found that there is co-ordination gap between the DISCOM employees and the consumers. More interactions and friendly behavior would be beneficial. He suggested for convening meeting of GRFs every two months. He raised the issue that during case hearings at the GRF, senior officers of the DISCOMs remain absent. Only Junior engineers/ Clerks are attending, who do not have any idea about concerned case. He requested the Commission for convening SAC meeting and above suggested GRFs meetings.

15. **Sri Debabrata Pattanayak** highlighted the issue of defective meters. If the billing is done on regular basis and given to the consumers, the arrear should not accumulate for one year. Hefty penalty is being raised by the DISCOMs on common consumers in the name of defective meters. In areas of TPNODL, the power cut time period sometimes extends to 10-12 hours, and this should be restricted to 6 hours. The DISCOM people and the Consumers do not acknowledge the presence of SAC Members. So, he requested to involve SAC Members in resolving consumers dispute/ issues. Their involvement may help to understand and resolve the issues of the consumers and DISCOM. He suggested that the load consumption pattern must be monitored for 2-3 months and then the Security Deposit should be increased, if required. He also appreciated the work being done by TPNODL.
16. **Sri Gour Chandra Panda** insisted that the list of DISCOM officers, their email id and phone numbers should be available in their website which is currently not available. He suggested that when a line is taken under maintenance, all the associated works on that line must be completed during that period, so that repeated power cuts can be avoided. He mentioned that TPNODL has done a lot of work and has increased the manpower through outsourcing. But he raised his concern that the DISCOM officers are not monitoring the BA employees work adequately and necessary action may be taken.

After the deliberations of the SAC Members, the Chairperson invited the special invitees to discuss the issues and to make suitable suggestions. Their replies are summarized as stated hereafter.

Sri Bhadresh Bachubhai Mehta, Director OPTCL acknowledged the view about high manpower cost of the company and said that necessary steps have been taken to streamline it. We would prepare a roadmap to resolve all legacy issues & move forward towards optimization and put it forward to the Commission. Regarding pending Industrial applications in TPNODL area, necessary actions have already been taken like augmentation of transformers & upgradation of the network. Within a few months, spare power transmission capacity will be available to cope with the growing demand in the northern zone of the state. Addressing the issue of transmission of power from inter-state generating stations, he stated that there has never been an incident when the state has been deprived of power from inter-state generating stations due to transmission constraint. In addition, we have spare capacity available which is utilized by the STOA customers. He acknowledged the earlier issue of OPTCL had regarding connectivity from Darlipali Power station to the state network. He informed that in the upcoming Thermal power station project, where GRIDCO has power allocation, lines are being constructed from the plant to Meramundali-B substation and by this process, the transmission charges of CTU will be avoided. He finally concluded that all the views of the members have been noted and rightful actions would be taken accordingly.

Shri Trilochan Panda, MD, GRIDCO, addressing to the various issues raised by the Members replied that they are trying to optimize the cost by adhering to the merit order despatch. Since last five years, GRIDCO is adhering to the RPO guidelines of GoI and Resource Adequacy norms. Odisha is one among the 6 states which has been taken under pilot study by the CEA. He informed that while we are keeping redundancy in the transmission and distribution side, resource adequacy norms or redundancy norms are not being met during peak demand which is why most of the states are opting for power cut during peak hours. Due to climate change and variability of nature, peak demand is changing rapidly. During summer, the peak demand period of 4 hours has now elongated to 8-10 hours. But necessary action is being taken to meet the DISCOM load requirement. Many tools and softwares/ simulators are being used while procuring power and optimizing the cost. He further appraised that GRIDCO is very conscious about the cost aspect, and Odisha is one of the premiere states of the country to reduce the average power purchase cost and average BSP. The estimated power purchase cost for FY 2024-25 may be 312.15 paise/ unit. The actual power purchase cost for FY 2023-24 was 327.41 paise/ unit, for FY 2022-23, it was 340.59 paise/ unit. This has been possible due to availability of cheap power from the coal based thermal stations and the hydro stations in the states. The variability has been added due to RPO obligations. He informed that the market dynamics has been changing recently due to availability

of RE power and the industries are using their CD only during evening peak hours and it becomes difficult to manage during such period. He requested the commission to look into this matter.

Sri Ashish Kumar Mohanty, Director (Operation), OHPC, addressed the issue of revision of design energy. He informed that OHPC had carried out a study in 2006-07 which was submitted to the Commission in the year 2009-10. But the said proposal was not approved. However, if the Commission directs for revision of the design energy, the exercise would be taken up accordingly. Addressing the water reservoir level of Hirakud, he said that OHPC is allowed to drop down upto 600 ft while the actual design is for reservoir level of 590 ft. This issue had been discussed with the Department of Water Resource (DOWR) which has categorically told that since it's a multipurpose project, Irrigation requirement takes the precedence over power generation. Considering the data from meteorological department, they tend to keep some cushion and inform OHPC, the level for operation. He requested the Commission to issue an advisory note to DOWR to allow OHPC to generate upto the design reservoir level. Regarding the Small Hydro Electric Projects (SHEP), he informed that, the subsidiary of OHPC, Green Energy Development Corporation (GEDCOL) has been given the mandate to operate SHEPs. The SHEPs that were assigned have been worked out in coordination with the Renewable Energy Nodal agency and DOWR. DOWR has given observations on the DPRs prepared, concerning the reduced discharge available. Therefore, DPRs would be revised in coordination with the Renewable Energy Nodal agency. OHPC is aggressively taking up the Pumped Storage Projects (PSPs). He said that the construction work for Upper Indravati PSP having capacity of 600 MW will commence in 2025-26 and it will be completed by FY 2030-31. He requested the Commission for approval of the pending application for funds requirement for these PSPs.

Sri Kedar Ranjan Pandu, MD, OPGC, addressing to the concerns raised by the members explained that the generating units of Stage-I, Unit 1 & 2 are 30 years old units. The Renovation and Maintenance (R&M) of Unit-1 has already been started and both the unit's R&M are planned to be completed in the FY 2025-26 after which the efficiency is expected to increase remarkably. Generating Unit-3 & 4, commissioned under Stage-II are performing efficiently within normative parameters. Regarding RGO Obligations, he iterated that the tendering process has already been completed and 50 MW of solar is likely to be awarded soon and they are exploring the possibility of increasing their solar power portfolio.

Sri Bharat Ku. Bhadawat, Chief- Regulatory, Enforcement & Legal, TPCODL, deliberated on the issues raised by the SAC Members. Addressing the increased O&M expenses, he said that 25% increase in expenses has been seen due to change in skill category and increase in wages of the employees because of wage revision by the Government of Odisha. He said that out of Rs. 57 Crs under special R&M, Rs. 38 Crs is towards revised minimum wages. Further he said that the meters are being replaced only when the meters are tampered/defective or has completed more than 5 yrs of its installation. Awareness is also being created among public about Smart Meters. Regarding enforcement activities he informed that during inspection, videos and photographs are taken as evidence. He further requested the Commission that the bill revision period beyond two years may be allowed. He mentioned that since the assessment of load is a judicial process as per the Electricity Act, there cannot be any committee formed for that assessment as suggested by SAC Member, which is beyond the Act. He appraised the participants that TPCODL has achieved 7th position with A+ grade among all the Distribution Companies of the country in the ranking done by PFC.

Sri Dwijadas Basak, CEO, TPNODL, addressed the forum and intimated that TPNODL has achieved A+ grade in integrated score by PFC (MoP). The AT&C loss has been reduced to 14.22 % against Commission's Vesting Order target of 17.09% in the year 2023-24. Billing Coverage is 98.77% and the provisional billing has come down to 3% from 40% (at the time of takeover). The past arrear collection is Rs. 636 Crs within three and half years and has been passed on to GRIDCO. Then he addresses the issues raised by the members and said that TPNODL has changed the maintenance philosophy from breakdown maintenance to preventive maintenance which is generally done during the winter months. During Dana cyclone, there were no trippings while the two hours power cut was done as a precaution. Overall, the system trippings have reduced to half. Regarding behavioral issues of certain officers, he assured that being customer centric, this would definitely be looked into. Regarding reducing the gap with technological inputs,

he elaborated that a lot of investment has been done for Smart Grid, but skill development and managerial/procedural changes has to go hand in hand to achieve the goals. Gradually there will be improvements in quality of supply and the cost will come down. In the operational area of TPNODL, all the defective meters are replaced within 30 days and all the Smart meters are tested in the Licensee's lab before they are installed in the consumer premises.

Sri Soumitry Dey, Head-Regulatory, TPSODL, submitted that they have major consumer base at LT level, which accounts for 70% of total consumption. Improvements are being made in R&M, Consumer service and power quality. Installation of Smart Meters is also being done and public awareness is being created through various modes to reach the consumers. Clarifying the new service connection charges issue raised by a member, he replied that in the clarification of the Commissions, dated 09.12.2024, the timeline of new service connection and the connection charges have been revised as per Electricity Consumers Rules, 2020 and amendments thereof.

Sri Praveen Kumar Verma, CEO, TPWODL, responded that various camps are being conducted at many locations, both in rural and urban areas for awareness of various solar energy schemes. He also highlighted some of the important points concerning ARR and their achievement in operation such as, around 40% hike in minimum wages, improvement in skill level of meter readers, moving from bi-monthly billing to monthly billing in many areas and reduction in provisional billing from 40% (at the time of takeover) to current level of 7%. He also informed that there are areas where the HT losses are much below 8%, whereas there are certain areas where HT loss is as high as 13-14%. He submitted that TPWODL has collected Rs. 416 Crores of erstwhile DISCOM's arrears which has been passed on to GRIDCO. He requested that the bill revision period upto two years may be relaxed which would really benefit the customers in resolving their past grievances. The SAIDI has improved year on year basis, but in certain areas of Deogarh, Rairakhol, Sundargarh and Nuapada, which are prone to elephant movement, the power supply is cut based on the information received from forest department officials in the Whatsapp group, so as to save the elephants from electrocution. The DT failures which was at 7% (at the time of takeover), has been brought down to 4% last year and this year it's expected to be 2%. Further, he said that the billing efficiency has also improved.

Smt. Lipsa Das on behalf of the Government of Odisha, Energy Department stated that the Government has been providing huge investments under various schemes to strengthen the power transmission and distribution infrastructure of the state. Around Rs. 20,000 Crores has already been invested for this cause in order to maintain low tariff and requested the Commission not to increase the tariff for the year 2025-26.

Shri. S. K. Ray Mohapatra, Member of the Commission, briefly highlighted some of the facts relating to Odisha power system and ARR proposals. He informed all SAC Members that there has been no increase in tariff since the last three years. Further 10 paise/unit reduction was given for domestic consumers for the FY 2024-25. The state is surplus in energy but deficit in peak demand, which would continue for few more years. GRIDCO has projected energy requirement of around 40,000 MU with peak demand of approximately 7,000 MW in its ARR filing for FY 2025-26 and have tied up for capacity of 8900 MW from different sources such as, 5000 MW from thermal stations, 2400 from hydro power plants and 1500 MW from renewable sources. As per their ARR application, the fixed cost component is 48% whereas Variable Cost component is 52% of the power purchase cost. To cater to the load requirement of the state, the present transmission network of the state comprises of 200 grid substations and 26500 ckt kms of transmission lines at 132 kV, 220 kV and 400 kV level. Similarly, the distribution network has 1180 PSSs and around 5 Lacs ckt kms of distribution network. In this FY 2024-25, the Commission has notified three Regulations, which are, the OERC (Terms and Conditions for determination of Generation Tariff) Regulations, 2024 for the control period from 2024-25 to 2028-29, OERC (Framework for Resource Adequacy) Regulations, 2024 and OERC (Determination of Input Price of Coal) Regulations, 2024. The Commission is in the process of revising the Supply Code, Grid Code, Transmission Tariff Regulations and formulation of Deviation Settlement Mechanism. He highlighted that previously the RoE was 14% for all the generators whereas in the latest regulation, it has been increased to 15.5% for Run of River (ROR) hydro stations without pondage and 16.5% for all pumped storage power plants & ROR stations with pondage to promote development of HEP. Stressing the fact that the actual energy generated by HEPs is less than the design energy in case of Upper Kolab, Upper Indravati, Chiplima and Balimela

HEPs, he intimated that as per regulations, if the actual energy generated by HEP is less than design energy continuously for 4 years, OHPC can approach CEA for revision of design energy. Some PSPs and floating solar projects of OHPC are in the pipeline. In case of OPGC, the major concern is handling and disposal of ash. As per the latest regulation, the consumer has to pay supplementary capacity charge and supplementary energy charge for emission control system. Discussing about OPTCL, he emphasized optimum utilization of transmission assets, although inherent nature of planning process (i.e. N-1 criteria & planning for peak load) results in underutilization of transmission assets. But there is need for extending the transmission networks to remote areas and areas expecting industrial growth. Since Green Hydrogen and Green Ammonia hub is likely to be created in Paradeep and Gopalpur area, transmission network must be strengthened accordingly. Regarding Reliability Support Charge for CGPs, OPTCL has submitted a report prepared by PRDC and there is recommendation for charging @ Rs. 27.5/kVA/month on base MVA of CGPs. The industries having CGPs would be levied the Reliability Support Charge for getting the benefit of the entire transmission network of the state. The matter is under examination. Further talking about SLDC, he mentioned that SLDC is in the process of implementation of SAMAST, that would be helpful for Deviation Settlement Mechanism, Scheduling & Billing etc. SLDC is also procuring software for cyber security in line with the direction of CEA and MoP. The demand forecasting software is also being developed in coordination with IIIT-Bhopal, to forecast future demand based on available 15mins time-block data. He informed the SAC Members that three DISCOMs (TPCODL, TPSODL & TPWODL) have completed more than 4 years of operation and TPNODL has completed more than three years of operation. As per Vesting Order, performance review has been completed through a third party for TPCODL after completion of 3 years of operation. The tender has been floated for third party performance review for other three DISCOMs. Since the takeover of the DISCOMs, GRIDCO is able to pay the generators bills without any outstanding. Further, the DISCOMs are also investing in CSR activities in its area of operation. The Billing efficiency, Collection efficiency and Metering status has improved with reduction in losses and increase in sales & revenue. Power Technology Centre at Bhubaneswar, one of the best Distribution control centers in the country, has been inaugurated recently by the Hon'ble Minister of Energy of State. A backup center will be at Sambalpur. He informed that the SAC Members, if interested, can visit the technology center at Bhubaneswar and appreciate their initiative. He advised that the DISCOMs need to focus on strengthening of distribution network infrastructure for reducing technical loss, improving reliability & availability of power supply with objective to achieve (24 x 7) power supply, emphasis has to be given for investment under CAPEX covering three major areas i.e. Load Growth, Loss Reduction and Reliability Improvement. He further iterated that rebate of 10 paise per unit is being given to Commercial & Industrial consumers and consumers with Smart Meters having MD>10KW, who consume electricity during solar hours, i.e. 8 AM to 4 PM. GRIDCO has surplus power during these hours since it has tied up with RE generators for RPO obligation, and this benefit would motivate the consumers for increasing consumption during solar hours. He clarified the confusion regarding Installation of Smart meters, that once the Smart Meters are installed under CAPEX (as proposed by DISCOMs), no meter rent would be collected from consumers. He highlighted the benefits of Smart meters in the long run for both DISCOMs as well as the consumers. The proposal is under consideration of the Commission.

Chairperson of the Commission appreciated the active participation of all the SAC Members and the licensees & generators. He assured that all the suggestions and remarks shall be duly addressed during Tariff determination.

Shri Priyabrata Patnaik, the Commission Secretary, thanked all the participants for attending the Meeting and also for giving their valuable suggestions and opinions and declared ending of the meeting.

Sd/-

(Gajendra Mohapatra)
Officiating Chairperson