

Grassroots Reachout &
Networking in Rajasthan through
Consumer Action (GRANIRCA)

Plight of Electricity Consumers in Rajasthan



Supported by

Ministry of Consumer Affairs,
Food & Public Distribution
Government of India
सत्यमेव जयते

#1220

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An Analysis of a Consumer Awareness Survey



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Organisation Background

Consumer Unity & Trust Society (CUTS) has been instrumental in bringing various changes at the policy level as well as in redressal mechanism for protection of consumer's interests. CUTS has also been playing a proactive leadership role with regard to the enactment and strengthening of the Consumer Protection Act 1986. To know more about CUTS, please visit our website <http://www.cuts-international.org>

However, even after about 25 years of enactment of such a dynamic and unique Act, the situation of consumers is still not as expected in India. The changed scenario of globalisation, technological advancement and emergence of various new sectors has further posed many new challenges before the common consumers today. Therefore, to address such issues, CUTS has initiated a project entitled, Grassroots Reachout & Networking in Rajasthan through Consumer Action (GRANIRCA) with the support of the Department of Consumer Affairs, Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution, Government of India under the Consumer Welfare Fund (CWF).

The objective of the project is to generate more capable consumers by way of equipping them with knowledge & skills and build up zealous grassroots activists through intensive training, capacity building and orientation programmes on consumer protection issues to create an enabling environment at the grassroots. The duration of the project is for a period of three years, i.e. January 2010-December 2012. It covers all seven divisions and is being implemented in 12 districts, i.e. Tonk, Chittorgarh, Kota, Bundi, Alwar, Banswara, Jodhpur, Jalore, Churu, Sikar, Dholpur and Dausa.

For more information, please visit: www.cuts-international.org/cart/GRANIRCA

The research study was conducted by joint efforts of GRANIRCA project team (Deepak Saxena, Amarjeet Singh, Arjun Kant Jha, Dharmendra Chaturvedi, Abhimanyu Singh and Jai Shree Soni of CUTS CART) and district partners of the project (list is attached at the end of the report) under the overall guidance of George Cheriyan, Director, CUTS International & Head, CUTS Centre for Consumer Action, Research & Training (CUTS CART). The project team was mainly responsible for conceptualisation of idea, development of research questionnaire, monitoring, assisting and guiding the district partners in data collection, data feeding and analysis for preparing the research document, whereas the district partners were mainly responsible for collection of data from the targeted authorities in their respective districts and sending it to the project team.

About the Project

Lack of consumer access to adequate information, improper understanding about the redressal mechanism/procedure as well as other socio-economic vulnerabilities of individuals and households are the reasons that the under-privileged classes are not getting the required corrective action.

As mentioned earlier in order to address the problem, CUTS is partnering with the Department of Consumer Affairs, Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution, Government of India, under the Consumer Welfare Fund (CWF), the implementation of the project entitled ‘Grassroots Reachout & Networking in Rajasthan through Consumer Action’ (GRANIRCA) in 12 districts of Rajasthan. The purpose of this project is to enhance strong consumer movements at the grassroots in seven divisions of the State by ensuring an enabling environment for protecting consumer interests, which will, in turn, contribute to the national interest.

Specific Objectives

The objectives of the project is to build a strong consumer movement by equipping consumer activists with skills and creating zealous grassroots’ activists through intensive training, capacity building and orientation programmes on consumer protection issues.

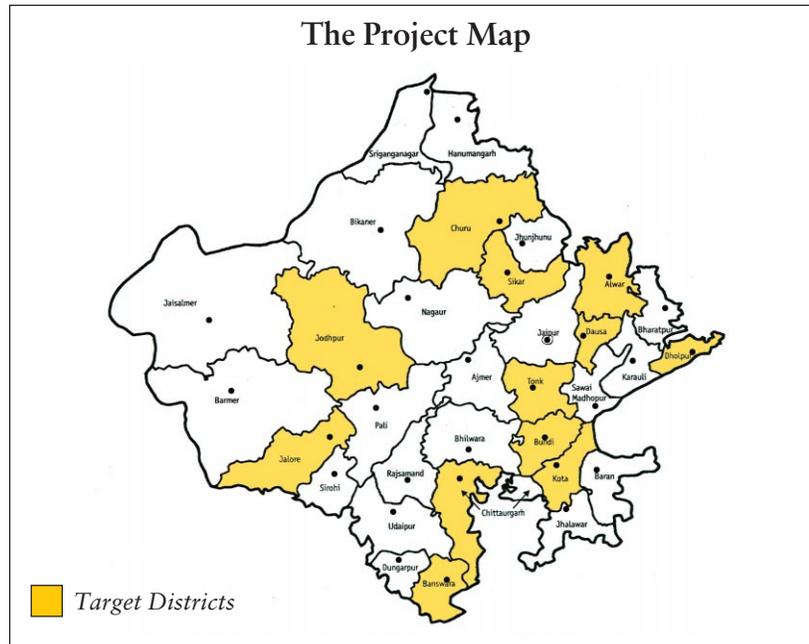
Project Activities

- Launching of launch-cum-orientation of district partners.
- Research activities that include identification of NGOs, diagnostic survey of consumer protection, needs assessment, field study, data collection, compilation/analysis of relevant consumer issues.

- Public interfaces and outreach meetings on consumer issues.
- District-level training workshops in each of the 12 districts.
- State feedback roundtables to share the learnings from various districts, and build and strengthen the network.
- Media sensitisation workshops in each of the 12 districts, and also at the state level;
- Advocacy with the government agencies in identified divisions and Central and State governments.
- Complaints Handling and Information and Advisory Services (CHIAS) through a dedicated cell.
- Publication of reports, briefing papers/newsletters and creation of a programme website and a collective communication device for wider outreach.

Duration and Coverage

The project is for a period of three years, i.e., January 2010 to December 2012, covering all seven divisions of Rajasthan, comprising 12 districts, namely, Tonk, Chittorgarh, Kota, Bundi, Alwar, Banswara, Jodhpur, Jalore, Churu, Sikar, Dholpur and Dausa.



Expected Outcomes

- *Empowerment:* People will be assertive consumers to uphold their rights and fight for justice.
- *Questioning Society:* Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) will act as “watchdogs”.
- *Enforcement:* Better service delivery areas and efficient redressal mechanism will be enforced.
- *Enabling Environment:* Protecting consumer interests, which will ultimately create an enabling environment for protecting the state interest.
- *Good Governance:* Contribute towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).
- *Replicable Model:* Result in a model of empowering consumers through networking and thus offer a model for further expansion in the identified districts and elsewhere.

3

Research Background

The power sector is the most important constituent of infrastructure. The performance of the power sector directly impacts the overall economy of the State.

The basic problem of developing countries like India is the ignorance of the infrastructure and due to this, by the mid-1990s, most of the state electricity boards incurred heavy financial losses and became dependent on financial support from their respective state governments. When the state provided this service, it had to cross-subsidise between different classes of consumers to achieve the stated socio-economic objectives of the state. Introduction of subsidies made the electricity market inefficient and lack of competition further aggravated the situation. These included high T&D losses, skewed tariffs, poor quality of supply, weak and deteriorating T&D network and rapidly declining capability of State Governments to provide budgetary support to the power sector.

The primary concerns of consumers, specifically of the two categories - domestic and non-domestic, are tariff, quality of electricity supply, electrification, bill anomalies and grievance redressal mechanism, while other concerns include meter installation and reading, bill collections, faulty repairs, safety measures, etc. The concerns of utility, especially the distribution companies, include power theft, energy conservation, greater level of electrification, safety measures and proper distribution. Being closer to the user groups, the politicians and the governments found it difficult to resist a populist pressure, which has been considered as one of the major problems plaguing the sector in the pre-reform phase. So, it was in everybody's interest

that sufficient space was created for interaction among the stakeholders.

The objective of this study of year three of the project was not only to gauge the level of awareness of consumers in electricity reforms but to concentrate the study to understand the level of their satisfaction regarding all kinds of electricity services provided to them by the service provider. The key findings would then be taken as issues for advocacy and lobby with government, utilities and the regulator.

Key Research Findings

- Out of the total 2419 respondents from twelve districts, almost quarter of percent were female participants and 33 percent of these respondents were higher secondary pass. 96 percent of these respondents had electricity at home or elsewhere, and out of this, 84 percent and 60 percent had both domestic and agriculture category connections. Very few respondents had industrial or non-domestic connections.
- A huge number of respondents, almost 68 percent, felt lack of quality services as the main reason for not getting them to electricity services, 10 percent accounted for lack of proper infrastructure and 12 percent for exorbitant prices of electricity as other concerns.
- With regard to regulatory reform process, a huge number of respondents, almost 65 percent, were still unaware about RERC. This definitely indicates a very pathetic status of these reforms that started around 12 years back, sometimes in year 2000. It was even more sad that from the number of respondents, who were aware or had heard about RERC, 84 percent had not participated in any public hearing either on their own or through some organisation, which represents a disappointing picture of consumer participation in regulatory reform processes.
- There were some positive responses too. Almost half of the respondents had rated feeder renovation programme (FRP) as good project run by the government and found it useful and consumer friendly.
- On questions related to consumers' satisfaction, 59 percent respondents were still unaware of the available redressal mechanism adopted by utilities and as a result, as many as 74 percent had not lodged any complaint so far in any manner

whatsoever, and surprisingly 69 percent of the remaining respondents, who had lodged any type of complaint, do not seem to be satisfied with the way their complaint was resolved.

- 26 percent and 22 percent found the redressal system as huge time taking and worthless respectively, and for this reason, they never filed any electricity complaint.
- Regarding receiving electricity connections after applying, 45 percent respondents had a query that they found it difficult to get the connection and it almost took more than 45 days to get it.
- 66 percent of the respondents reported problems/loss caused due to supply of high voltage and out of these, 87 percent respondents reported that they did run to get compensation from the service providers on account of loss caused due to high voltage resulting in burning of electrical appliances and equipment etc.
- 69 percent of the respondents were totally unsatisfied with the quality and 75 percent seemed annoyed with the quantity of electricity supply.
- In case of changing faulty meters/transformers etc., 33 percent specified nearly seven days' time to get these; while 68 percent complained about fast running of their meters, which resulted into rapid change in reading.
- In an interesting question, respondents were asked as to whether the distribution companies pay to the consumers 5 percent of the cost as compensation for taking more than the prescribed time limit to get the meter replaced, a huge number of 80 percent said that they never received any such compensation.
- 53 percent of the respondents said that electronic meters were much more efficient and worthy than the normal meters. This result totally disapproves the myths about this kind of meter among consumers.

5

Research Methodology

The survey was conducted to gauge the consumer awareness level on all issues related to electricity reforms and the services provided to them by service provider of electricity sector in urban and rural areas. The sampling was done in the targeted 12 districts of Rajasthan under the project.

The geographical situation in these districts indicates that there are five to ten blocks in every district and it is also evident that the local CSOs do not have that much of outreach so as to cover their whole district. It was expected that these CSOs will cover atleast 60 percent of the total blocks of their home district.

From each of the selected block, consumers were targeted category-wise. Again, there were a number of *gram panchayats* in every block. So, the selection of these *gram panchayats* was done randomly.

In order to identify and address specific gender concerns, attempts were made to ensure maximum representation of females as electricity consumers.

One person, preferably head of the family, or the one dealing with such issues, from each household was interviewed with supplied questionnaire. He was the first choice as respondent and if it was difficult to reach him, then some other adult member, or the housewife, was interviewed subsequently.

The survey was done with the help of a local person, preferably volunteer, under the supervision of District Partner without any ambiguities or confusion.

The survey was supervised by the District Partner, who periodically met the survey teams and checked the filled-up questionnaires. Only upon the satisfaction of the District Partner, the filled up questionnaires were then finalised.

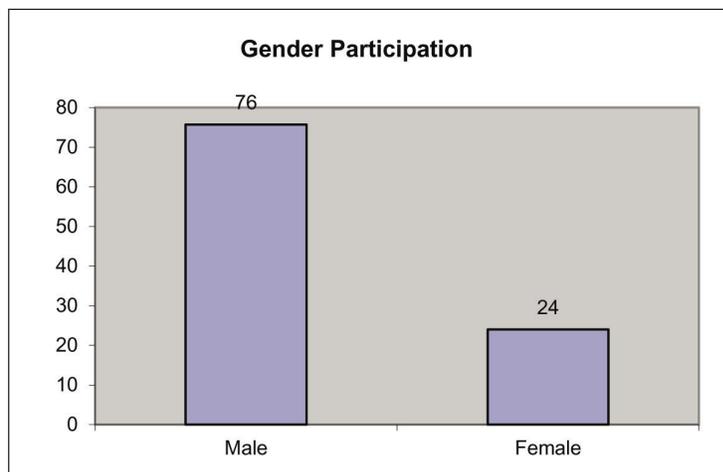
The project team members from Jaipur also made random visits to monitor and check the progress of the survey work in almost all the districts. The team members met the survey team and the project partners, and tried to find out if there was any difficulty in getting the samples filled up. The team members during their visits also did a few samplings themselves among a group of people. Prior to that, before finalisation, the team did sample testing at Jaipur and after the receipt of the feedback, the questionnaire was further revised and then finalised.

6

Background Information of Respondents - Part A

Participation

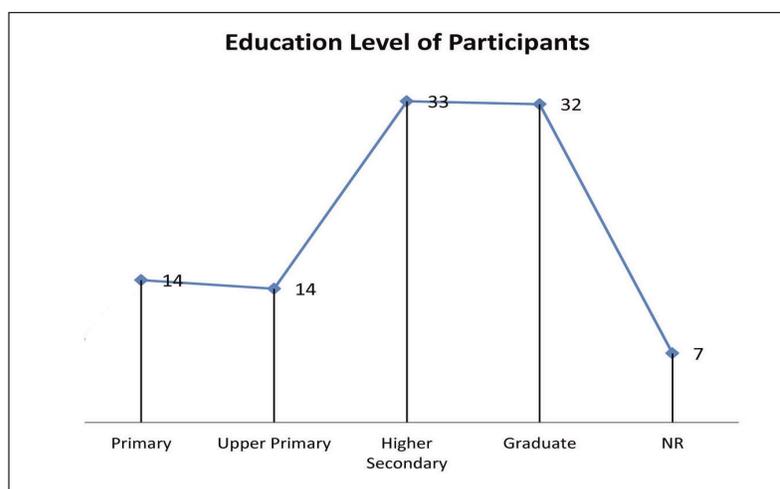
Out of the total 2419 samples collected from various categories of consumers, as earmarked in the survey methodology in the twelve targeted project districts, Gender participation in majority of districts was very encouraging. Despite the fact that women in rural Rajasthan are not so open, still the team managed to get some interviews from women consumers as well. In the twelve targeted districts, as many as 76 percent of respondents were male and 24 percent were female. Though the female ratio was much less than the male ratio, but still satisfactory, keeping in view the local traditions, limitations and bindings with women.



Educational Level

As evident from the graph, the educational level of the respondents in all the districts was a mixed one.

Graduates and the higher secondary pass respondents ranged almost equal with 32 and 33 percent respectively. Primary and upper primary were 14 percent each of the total respondents. However, there was no response from 7 percent.



Geographical Coverage

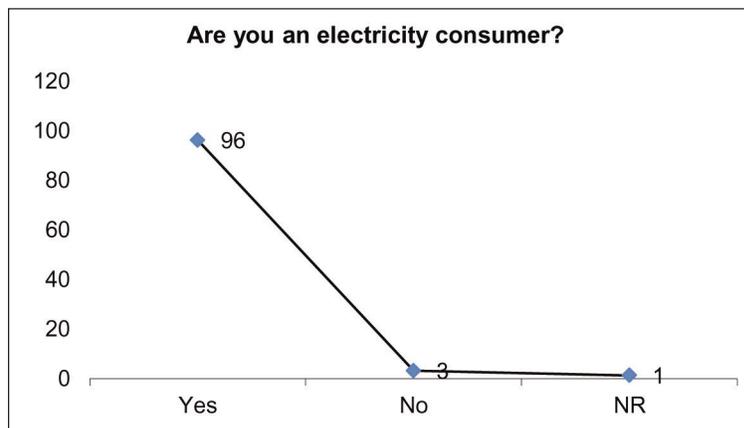
The geographical situation in these districts indicated that there are five to ten blocks in every district and the local district partners under the project covered maximum portion of the total blocks of their home districts. From each of the selected blocks, consumers were targeted category-wise. Again, there are a number of *gram panchayats* in every block. So, the selection of these *gram panchayats* was done randomly.

As seen in the graph, 75 to 90 percent of the respondents hailed from the grassroots, mainly from *gram panchayats* and hamlets. The range of percentage of respondents in tehsils and *panchayat samities* (blocks) varied from three to 30. Similarly, respondents from the district towns and equivalent cities, though not very much, were satisfactory. Here, the range was from five to 35 percent.

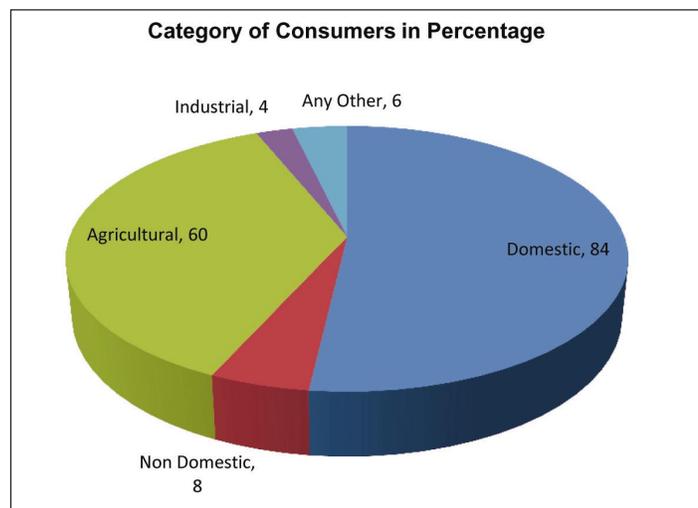
Level of Awareness of Respondents with regard to Electricity - Part B

1. Questions related to general information

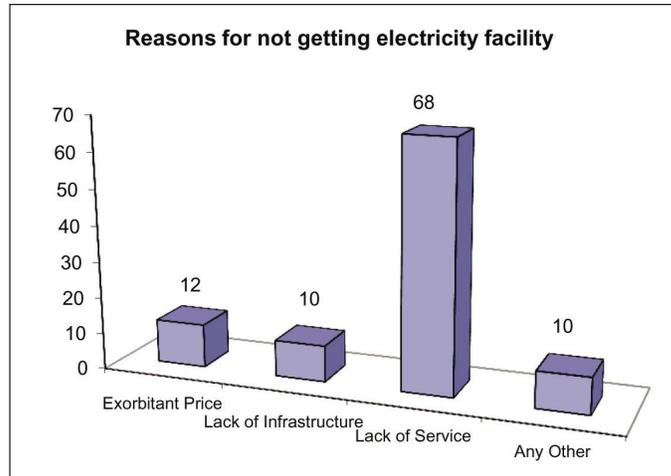
1.1 Starting with the perception of the basic knowledge of electricity sector and related issues in order to gauge their level of awareness, the first question asked from the respondents was whether the respondents are consumers of electricity, to which 96 percent said 'yes' and only 3 percent said that they are 'not', which means that they do not have electricity connection. A small percent of just one percent preferred not to give any answer.



- 1.2 The next question asked was about the category of electricity consumers, where the supporting graph says that majority of respondents (84 percent) belonged to domestic category, whereas 60 percent have agricultural connections, rest 4 percent have industrial connections – both medium and heavy, and 8 percent belonged to non-domestic category. Moreover, 6 percent respondents belonged to some other category, which means that they have mixed category connections.

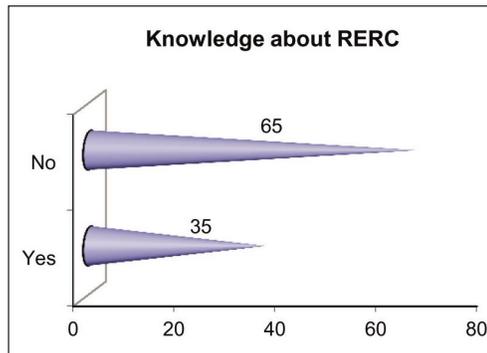


- 1.3 In continuation to the question 1.1, almost 4 percent said that they do not have access to electricity facility and on being asked about the reason for this, 68 percent quoted that they do not consider the service to be very useful, whereas 12 percent rated it as the service with exorbitant price, 10 percent reasoned for lack of infrastructure, and the remaining 10 percent quoted various miscellaneous reasons like poor financial conditions, tedious system for getting connections, no electrification in the village, etc.



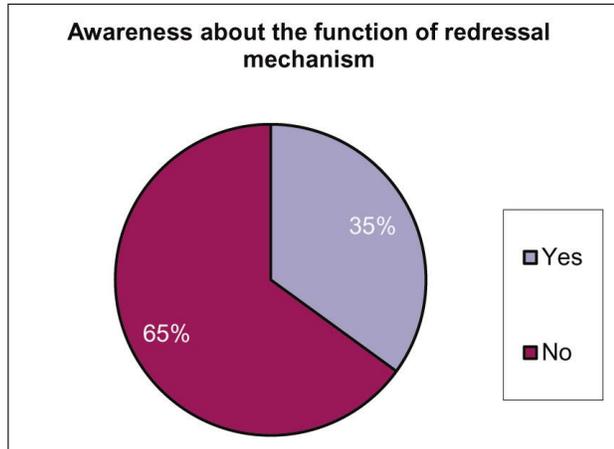
2. Questions relating to Electricity Regulatory Commission (RERC) and other issues

2.1 The first question in this regard was about the general awareness on RERC, to which only 35 percent responded positively, whereas a huge figure of 65 percent were not

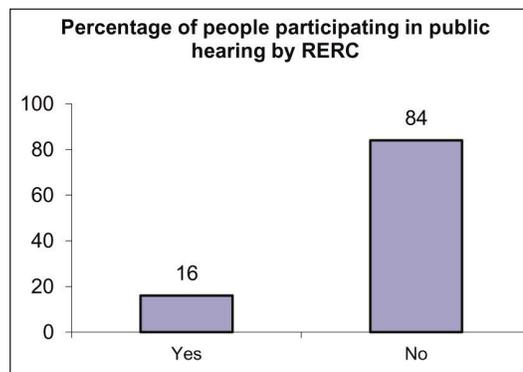


aware about this constitutionally formed body, which regulates the whole service as such.

2.2 In continuation to 2.1, respondents were enquired about their awareness about the functioning of RERC, of which only 35 percent respondents responded positively, whereas 65 percent responded negatively. This demonstrates a very disappointing picture of the system.

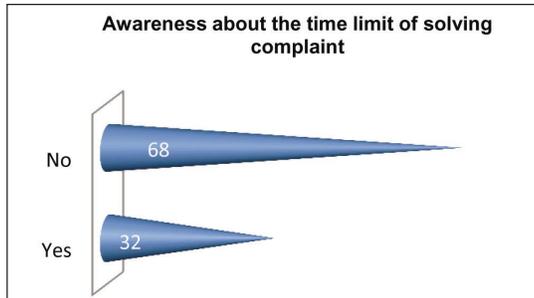


2.3 From the respondents who were aware about the functions of RERC, question was asked as to whether they have ever participated in any RERC

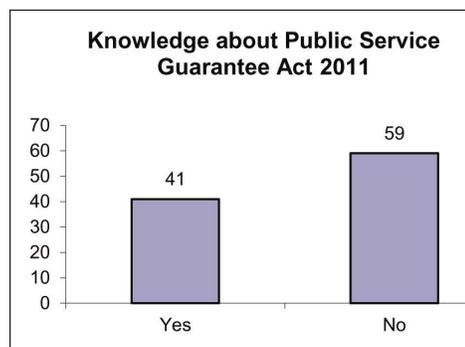


hearing. On this, the figure further deteriorated with almost 84 percent of the respondents saying that they had never taken part in any hearing and a small number, upto 16 percent, said that they had.

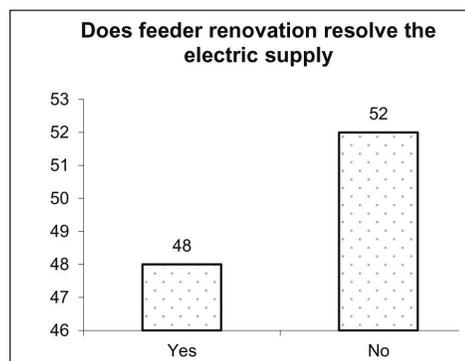
2.4 In a related question asked from the aware respondents that as to whether they are aware of the fact that RERC has mandated a time limit to all the distribution companies that render all types of electricity services to consumers, 68 percent again were again not aware about this provision as laid down by RERC and only 32 percent gave an affirmative answer to this, which again is a sorry state.



2.5 In a separate question about the newly enacted law in the State of Rajasthan by the name ‘Public Service Guarantee Act, 2011’, 59 percent respondents did not know about this Act as yet and only 41 percent had heard about it, with only little knowledge of it.



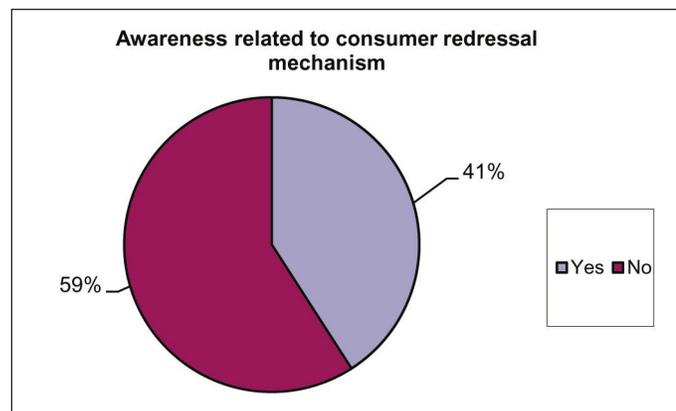
2.6 In the last question of this section, respondents were asked as to whether Feeder Renovation Programme has ever been able to resolve consumer problems pertaining to electricity. The survey revealed that 52 percent respondents mentioned it as an unfriendly programme, which was not much worth to consumers, and 48 percent rated it as a useful government run programme, which has brought changes in the electricity sector.



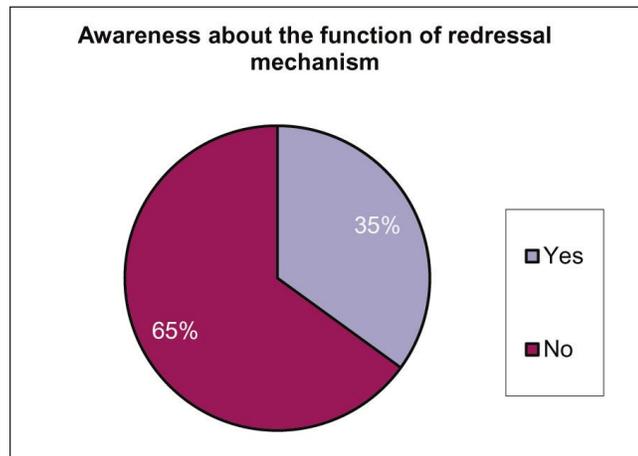
Level of Satisfaction of Respondents with regard to Electricity as Consumers - Part C

1. Few questions related to complaints and redressal mechanism established by service provider

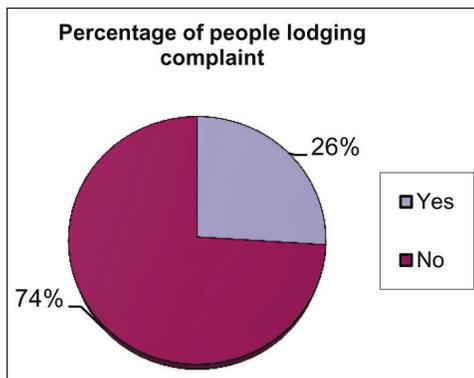
1.1 In the first question related to the awareness about the available redressal mechanism of service providers in the state, 59 percent of respondents gave negative response, which is certainly a poor state and needs a lot to be desired at this stage. However, 41 percent people said that they are aware of this mechanism.



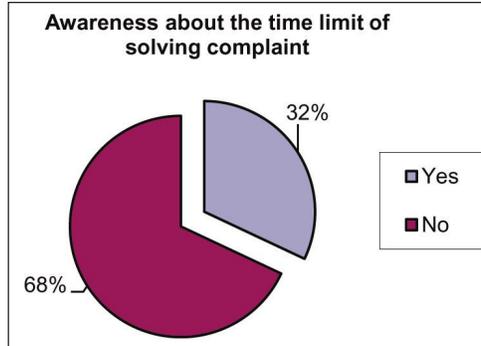
- 1.2 From the 41 percent respondents, who were aware of this redressal set up, again 65 percent were not aware about the methods followed to redress the consumer complaints and only 35 percent of them know a little bit of the mechanism or might have gone through the system.



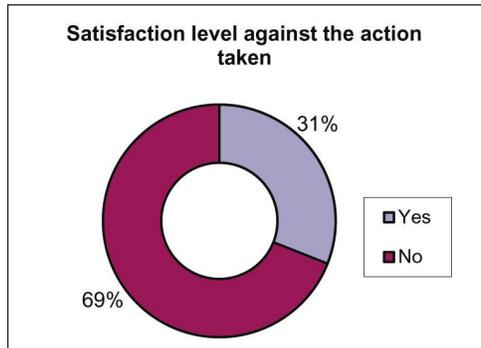
- 1.3 From the 35 percent of respondents as mentioned above in 1.2, 74 percent had not lodged any complaint so far against any service provider at any level and only a small figure of 26 percent had confirmed having gone through the process of redressal mechanism by way of lodging complaint against service providers.



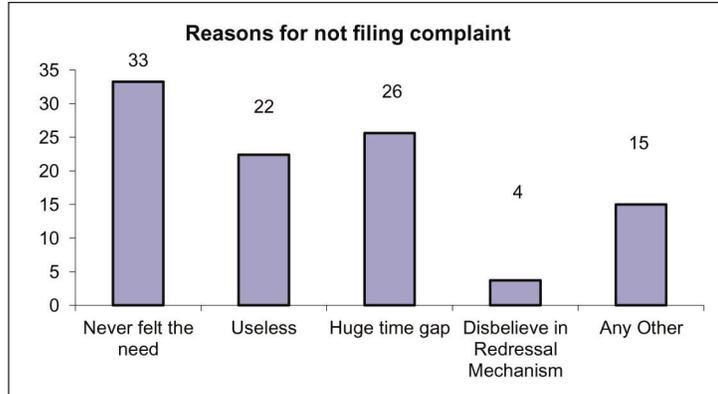
1.4 On being asked about the time limit for solving the complaints, again a huge figure of 68 percent revealed their ignorance and only a small figure of 32 percent people said that they were aware of it.



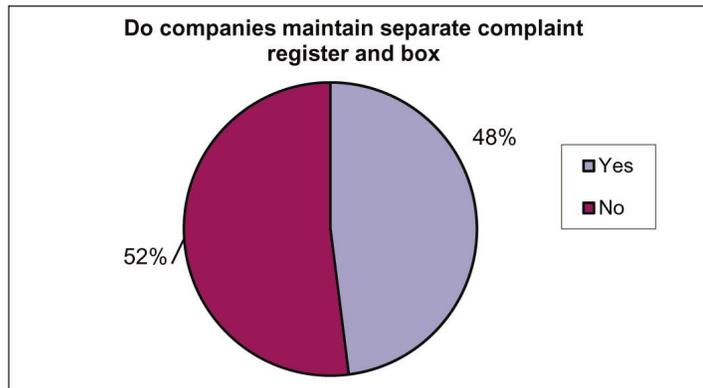
1.5 The same set of respondents, who took the initiative of filing the complaint, was further asked about the level of satisfaction from the redressal. The survey findings reveal that 69 percent were not satisfied with the action taken on their complaints by the redressal agencies of the service provider and only 31 percent seem to be satisfied with it.



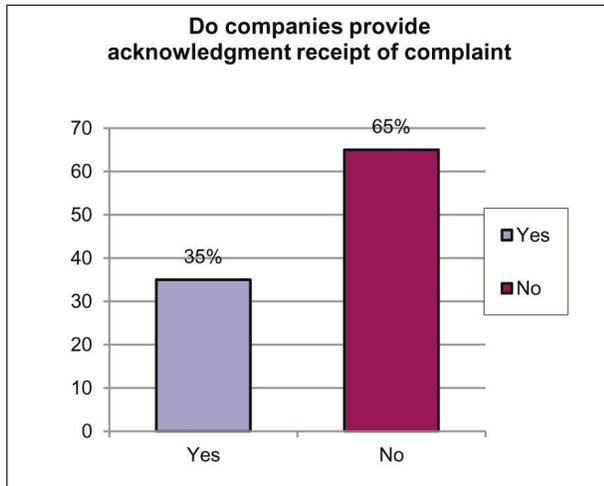
1.6 In a very important and interesting question asked from the set of those respondents, who had not lodged any complaint so far in any redressal agencies of the service provider, as many as 33 percent of those respondents never felt the need of complaining, 22 percent consider it as useless, 26 percent think that the procedure is too lengthy, 4 percent do not have faith and rest 15 percent had different reasons for it.



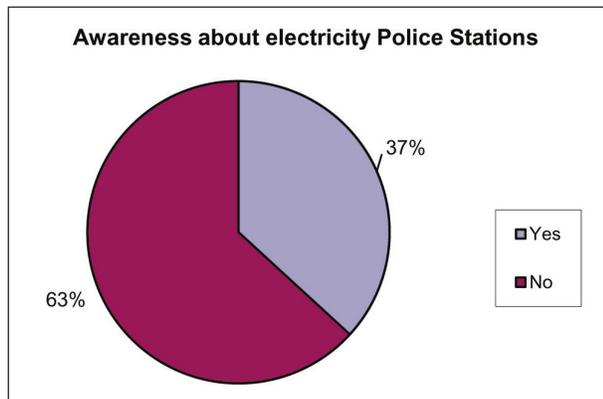
1.7 In a related question asked from the respondents, 52 percent of the respondents were unaware of the fact that distribution companies maintain a separate complaint box at each of their offices and only 48 percent agreed to this fact.



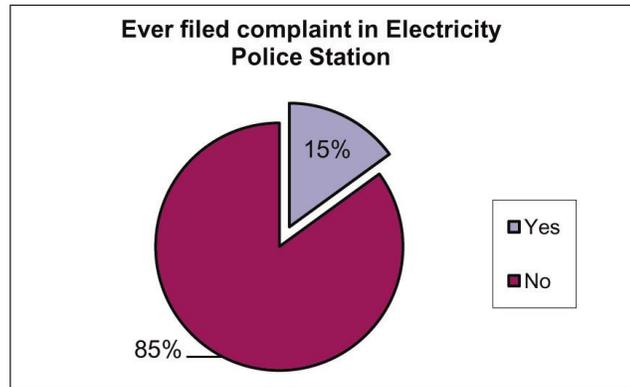
1.8 On being asked as to whether the distribution companies issue acknowledgement receipts of the complaints that they receive from complainant consumers, 65 percent respondent consumers denied and only 35 percent agreed that they receive such receipts.



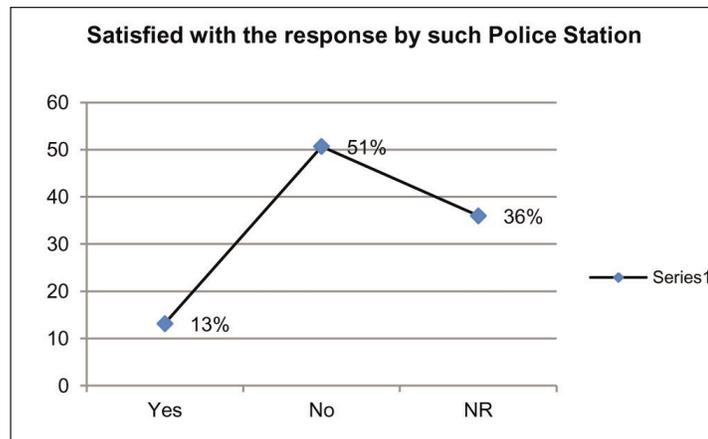
1.9 Similarly, when asked about the awareness of electricity police stations set up to control and curb power-theft types of complaints, 63 percent respondents responded negatively but 37 percent said that they were aware about these police stations.



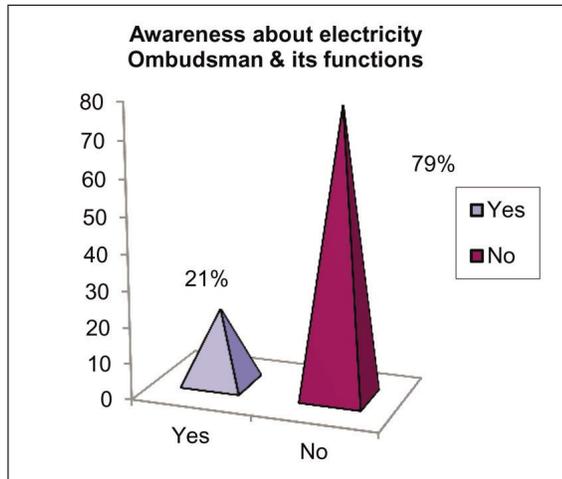
1.10 From the set of 37 percent, who were aware about these police stations, 85 percent respondents had never filed any complaint in such specific purpose stations and a small number of just 15 percent said that they had filed complaints.



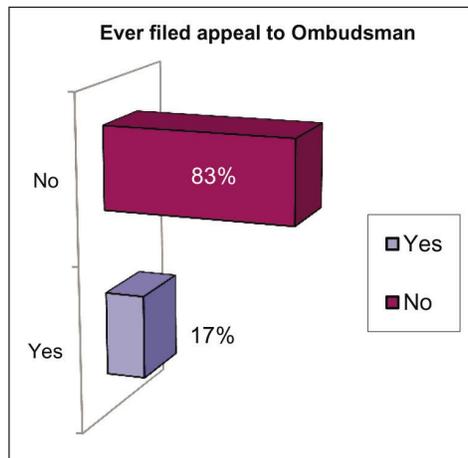
1.11 In continuation to this, 15 percent of the respondents of previous question were asked as to whether they were satisfied with the procedure, working and redressal provided by these police stations after lodging complaints, only 13 percent of them looked positive and affirmative, and the rest 51 percent said that they were not, whereas 36 percent did not have answer to this, which is again counted as a negative response.



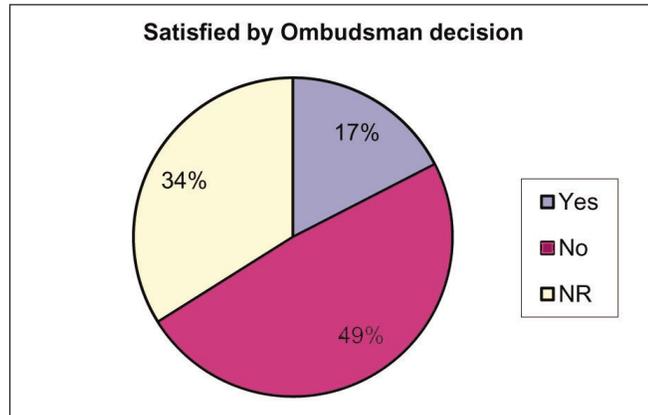
1.12 The next question in line was about the electricity ombudsman and its role, to which, as anticipated, only 21 percent responded positively and a huge number of 79 percent responded negatively.



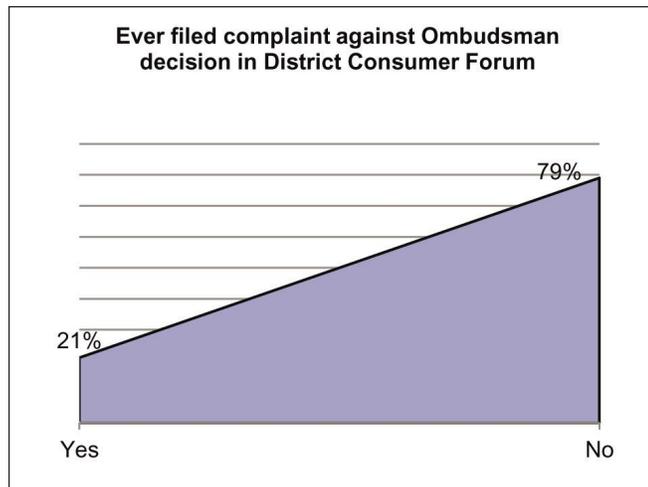
1.13 From this small percentage of 21 who responded positively, respondents were asked about whether they have ever filed a complaint before the electricity ombudsman, 83 percent said that they have not and only 17 percent had gone through the procedure of electricity ombudsman for redressal of their complaints.



1.14 Again from this small 17 percent of group, 49 percent said that were not satisfied with the decision of ombudsman, whereas 34 percent did not give any answer, which means that they are also to be counted as negative, and only 17 percent agreed that they were satisfied with ombudsman's decision.

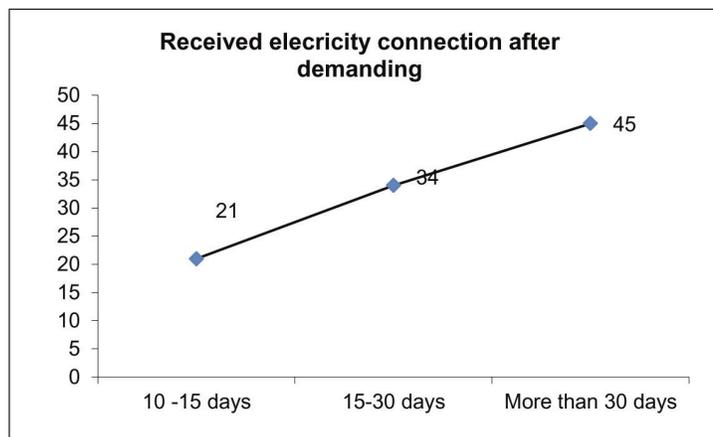


1.15 In the last question of this section pertaining to ombudsman only, from the set of respondents, who were not satisfied with ombudsman’s decision, 21 percent preferred to move to District Consumer Forum for their redressal, whereas 79 percent of them did prefer to stay back.



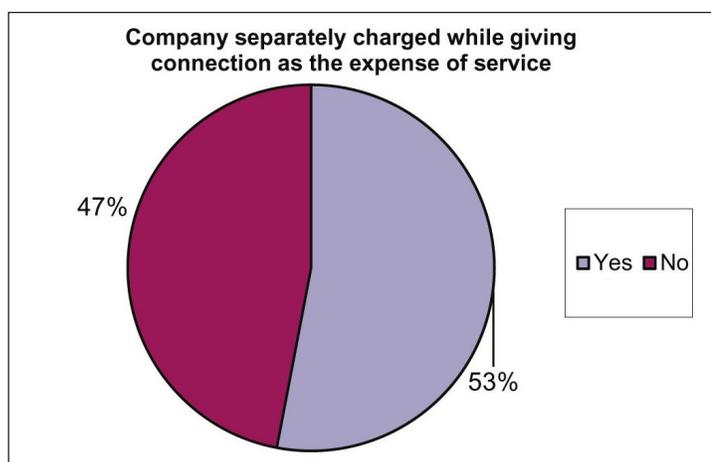
2. Few Electricity Connection related questions

2.1 The first question under this category pertained to number of days to which respondents were able to receive electricity connection from the date of filing request and demand note.

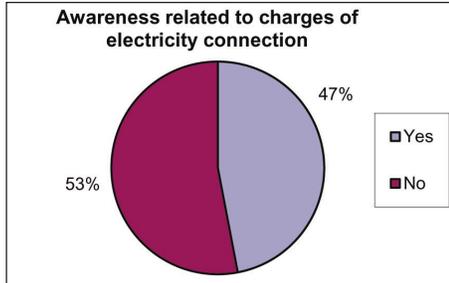


45 percent of the respondents earmarked more than 30 days as the period during which they were able to get electricity connection after making a request; 34 percent mentioned a period between 15 to 30 days; and 21 percent said 10 to 15 days for it.

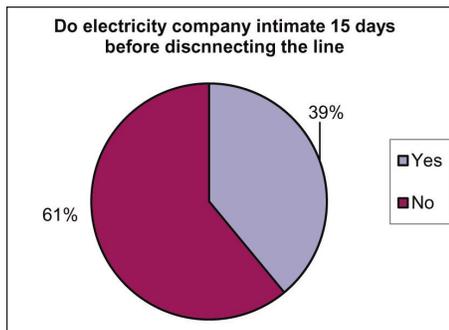
2.2 The next question related to connection was whether the distribution company at the time of issuing electricity connection did separately charge for expenses incurred on service line as well. The responses from the consumers were - 47 percent said 'no' and 53 percent said 'yes'.



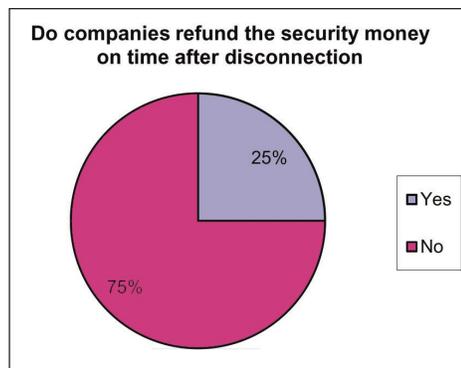
2.3 On an awareness related to receiving connection for the purpose of livelihood from small scale industry category and for the purpose of running a shop from the domestic category, 53 percent respondents were not aware and 47 percent were aware about this fact.



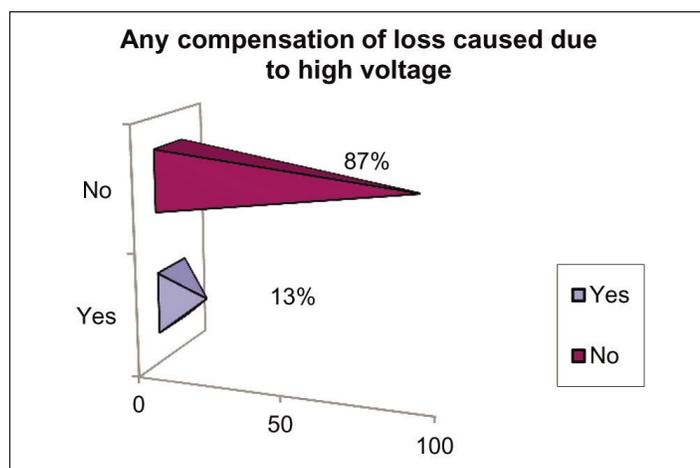
2.4 Regarding a question on disconnecting the connection with a 15 days warning, 61 percent were not aware and only 39 percent seemed to be aware of this procedure followed by the distribution companies.



2.5 In an interesting question on whether the companies return the securities back to consumers after the disconnection is done, a huge number of 75 percent responded negatively and only a quarter of respondents affirmed to it. This seemed to be a general trend, which needs to be taken up seriously.

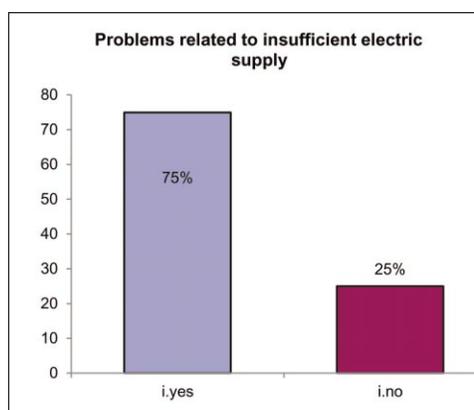


2.6 In the last question under this section of questions related to connections, a very important question as to whether the companies do compensate aggrieved consumers for the loss occurred due to high voltage resulting into burning of electrical and electronic equipments and home appliances, yet another big percentage of respondents, 87 percent, gave a negative response, whereas only a small 13 percent gave an affirmative answer.

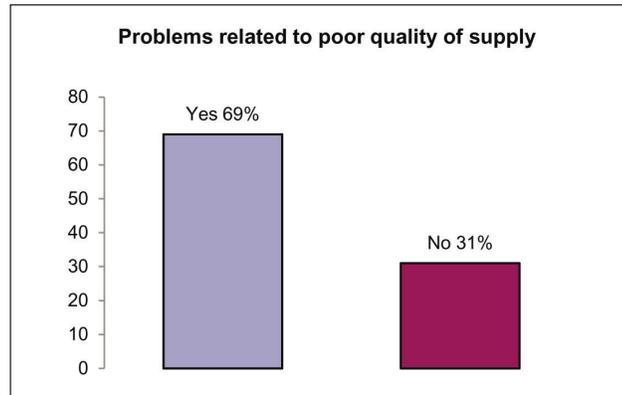


3. Questions related to electricity supply

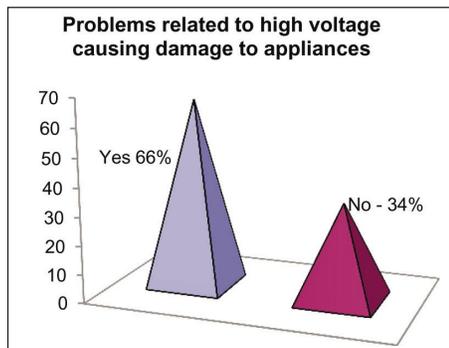
3.1 (i) The first question related to supply of electricity was regarding the problems, which the consumers often face frequently and the first sub-question was regarding the insufficient supply of electricity, to which 75 percent said that they do face such problem.



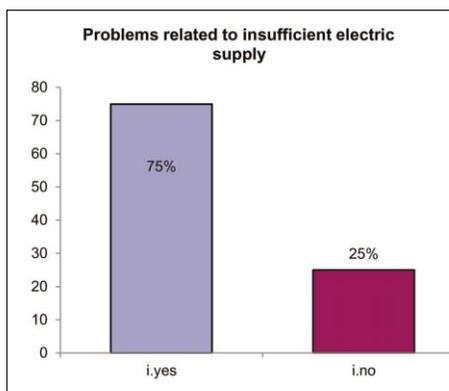
3.1 (ii) Regarding the poor quality of electricity supply, 69 percent of the respondent consumers do face such problems and 31 percent did not have such kind of problems.



3.1 (iii) Regarding the high voltage problems, 66 percent respondents said that they do face such problems and only 34 percent seemed satisfied and did not have such kind of problems.

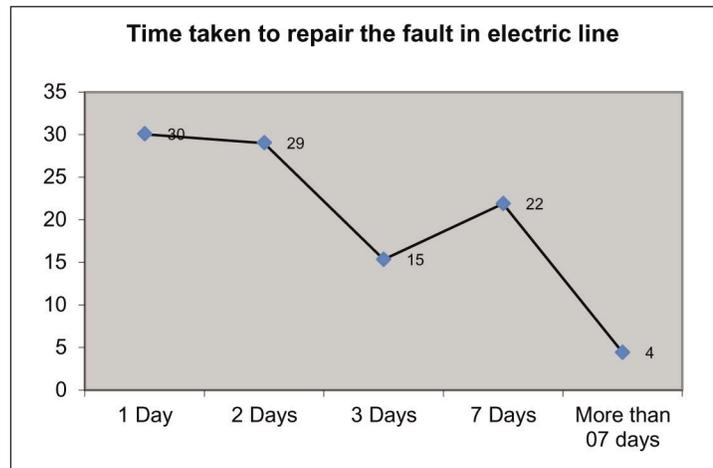


3.2 Regarding a general question as to how many days does it normally take to replace the faulty/damaged transformers of the locality, the largest size of 33 percentage quoted for seven days, 23 percentage each



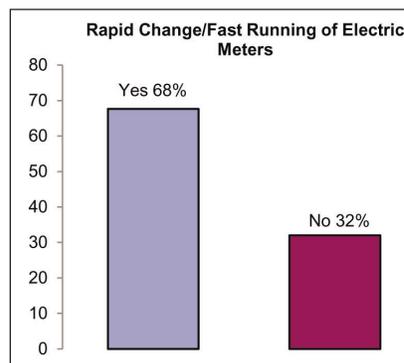
quoted for one and two days respectively, whereas 16 percentage of respondents marked as 3 days' time. However, 6 percentage of respondents said that it normally takes more than seven days.

- 3.3 On a related question, the respondents were asked about the time normally taken to repair the faulty electrical lines, to which 30 percent of respondents mentioned one days' time, whereas 29 percent mentioned two days, 15 percent mentioned 3 days, 22 percent mentioned 7 days and 4 percent mentioned that it takes more than seven days' time to repair the faulty lines by the distribution companies.



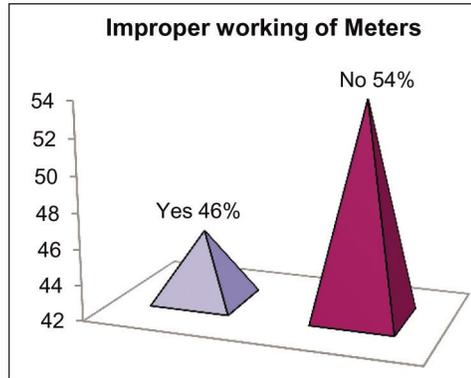
4. Few questions related to electricity meter

- 4.1 (i) With regard to questions related to electricity meters, the first question was on rapid change or fast running of the meters, 68 percent of respondents complained of fast running of their

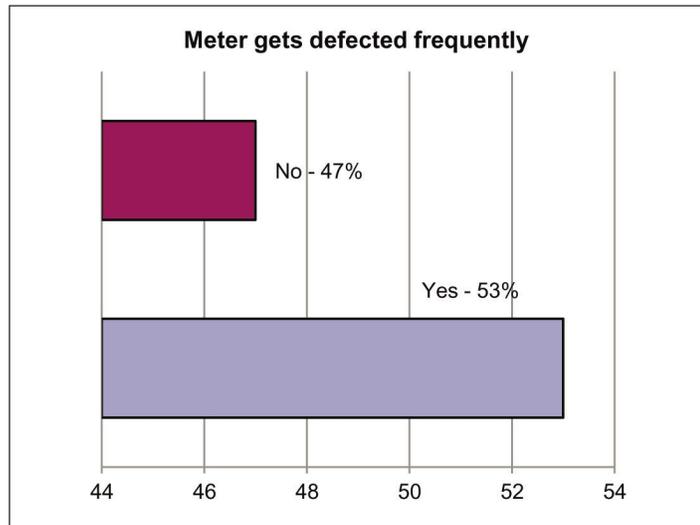


meters, which ultimately resulted into more reading and in turn more charge.

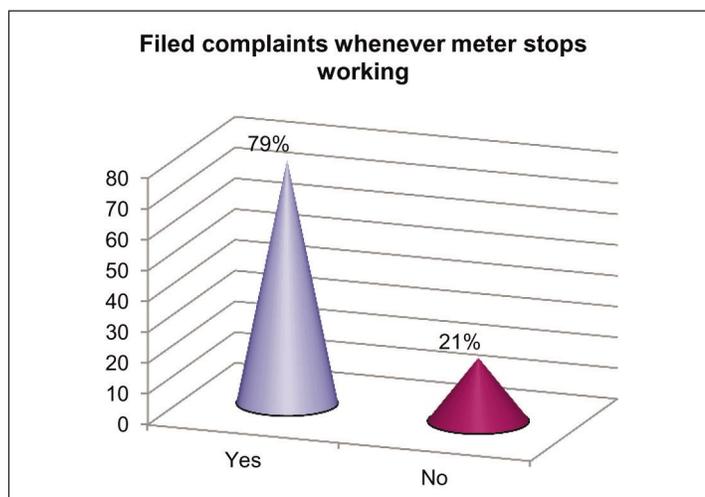
4.1 (ii) The next question was with regard to improper functioning of meters, here only 46 percent of respondents said that were satisfied with the functioning of their meters, whereas 54 percent of people were not.



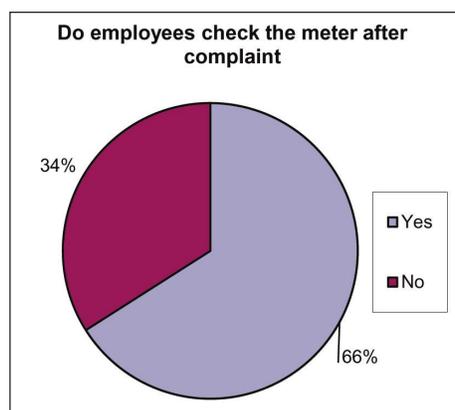
4.1 (iii) With regard to the meter getting defected quite frequently, 53 percent respondents said they face such problems, whereas 47 per cent respondents did not have any kind of such problems.



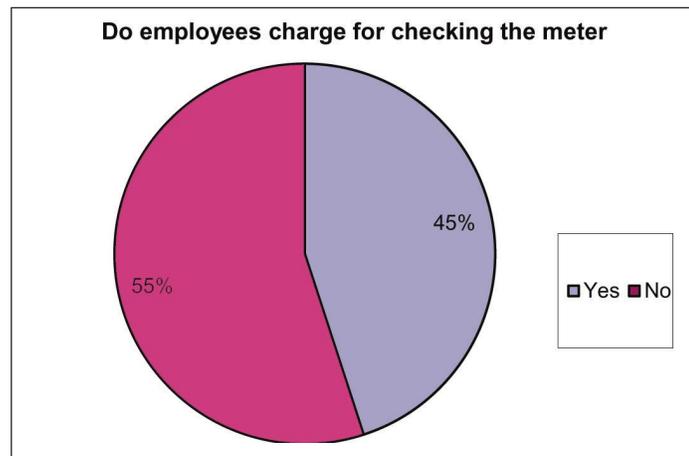
4.2 On being asked as to whether the respondents have ever complained whenever their meter stops working, maximum number of respondents (79 percent) said yes, whereas 21 percent respondents had never complained with regard to stopped meters.



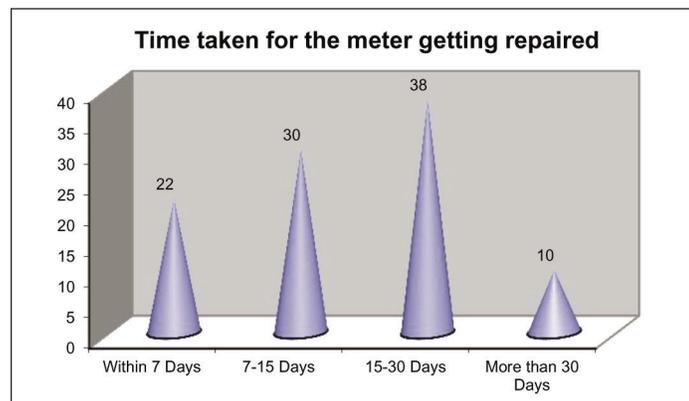
4.3 In continuation of the question number 4.2, the respondents were asked as to whether the complaints of stopped/faulty meters were attended. The result from the respondents looked satisfactory as 66 percent of them said that their complaint was attended and only 34 percent of them said that it was not.



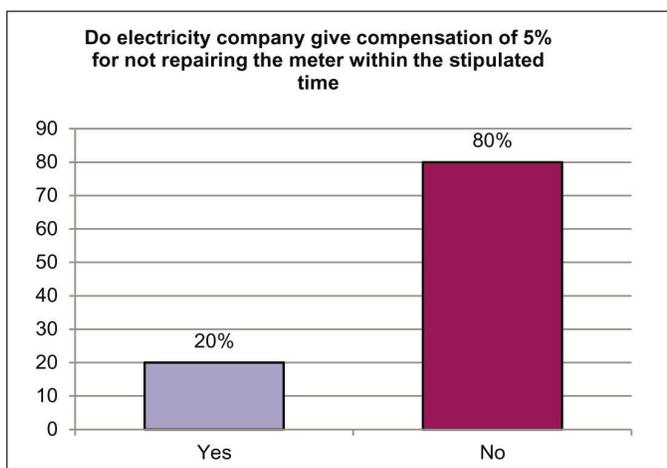
4.4 The respondents were further asked as to whether the employees attending the complaints ever charged for the services rendered by them, 45 percent said that they did, which is very astonishing, as normally the checking is simply done free of cost, and only in the case of meter getting burnt or other defects, which requires replacing of meter, the cost needs to be submitted in the offices.



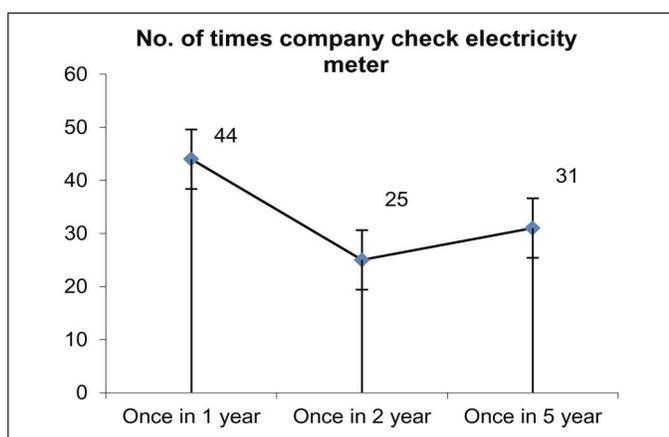
4.5 The respondents were asked as to how much time it normally takes for their meters getting replaced or repaired, 38 percent of them said that it takes 15 to 30 days, 30 percent said 7 to 15 days, 22 percent said it is done within seven days and nearly ten percent said that it takes more than 30 days.



4.6 In an interesting question, respondents were asked as to whether the distribution companies pay to the consumers 5 percent of the cost as compensation for taking more than the prescribed time limit to get the meter replaced, a huge number of 80 percent said that they never received any such compensation, whereas only 20 percent were aware of such policies, which is another issue worth advocating before the utilities.

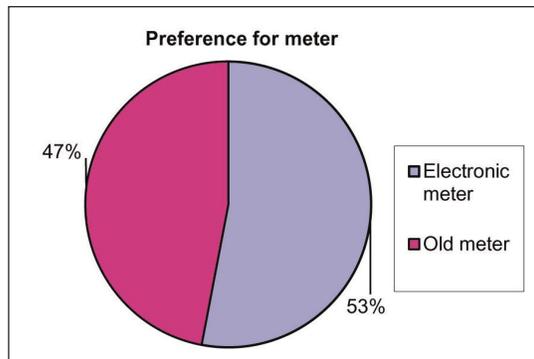


4.7 The next question was with regard to constant checking of meters by the utilities, 44 percent of the respondents said that it is done once in a year. This response looked



satisfactory from the utilities point of view. However, 31 percent mentioned that it is done once in 5 years, whereas 25 percent said that it is done once in two years.

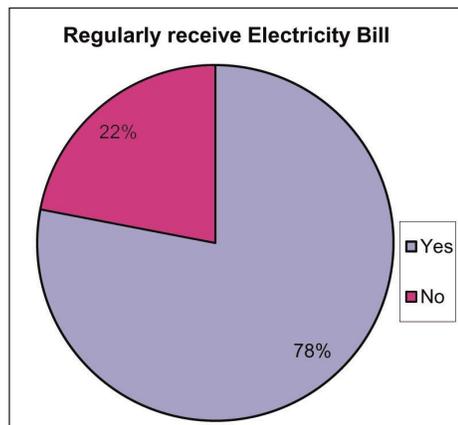
4.8 The last question under this section related to meters was with regard to difference between the two meters, electronic and old



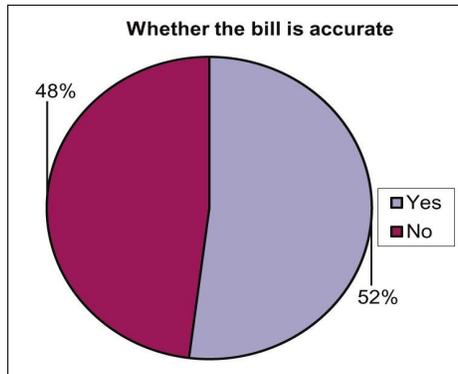
meters. 53 percent of the respondents said that electronic meters are more efficient and useful. This result totally disapproves the myths for this kind of meter among consumers.

5. Few questions related to electricity bills

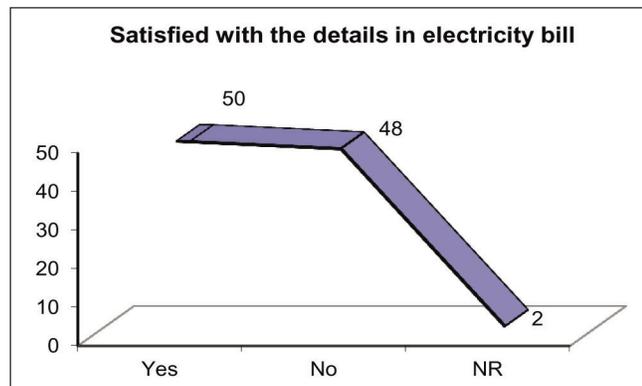
5.1 The last section of this questionnaire was related to electricity billing to consumers. The first question was whether the consumers do receive the bills on time and regularly. 78 percent of the respondents affirmed that they do receive the bills regularly and on time.



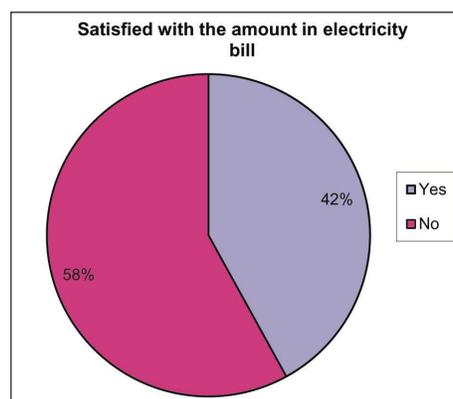
5.2 In continuation to the first question, it was asked whether the bills, which they receive are completely correct or not. On this 52 percent of respondents found the bills accurate.



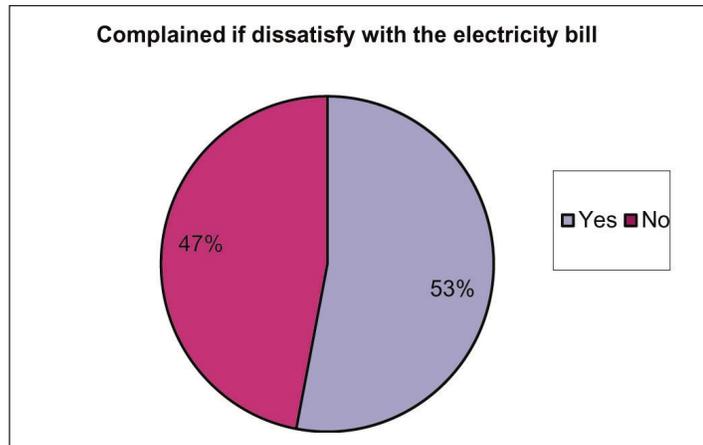
5.3 With regard to information provided to consumers in the electricity bills, half of the respondents found it updated and sufficient and up to their satisfaction.



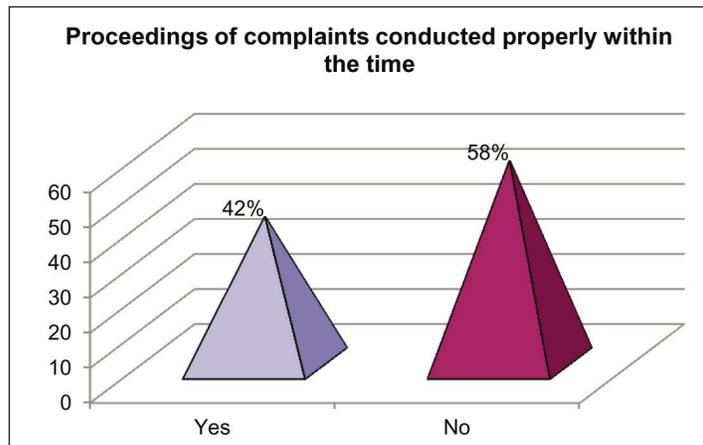
5.4 On being asked about the wrong/incorrect billing, 58 percent found the bills as too heavy and generally too much, which sometimes is beyond their capacity to fill.



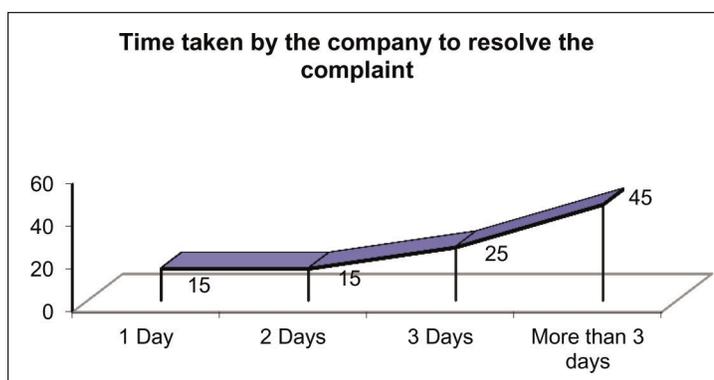
5.5 From the respondents, who did not look satisfied with the billing, only 53 percent complained to utility offices about it.



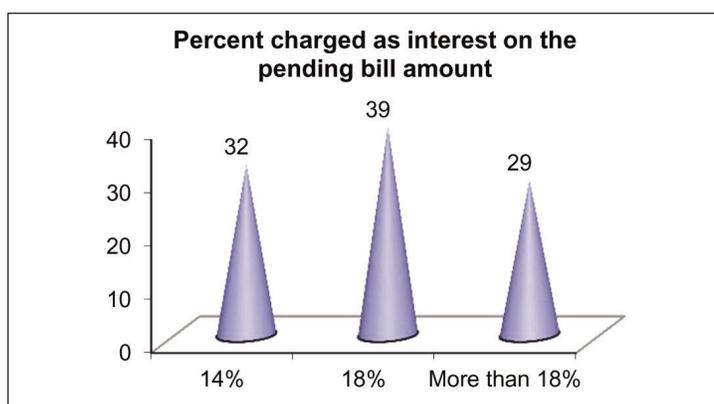
5.6 The same set of respondents were further asked as to whether they were satisfied with the complaints they lodged for the incorrect billing, 58 percent looked unsatisfied on the procedure followed and the time taken in rectifying the problem. This is again an issue of concern.



5.7 Now, the next question on the similar lines was with regard to time normally taken by distribution companies for resolving the complaint. 45 percent of the respondents mentioned more than three days, whereas 25 percent said that it takes normally three days. 15 percent each opined for one and two days respectively as the period, which the companies usually take to resolve consumer complaints related to billing.



5.8 In a general question, respondents were asked as to at what interest distribution companies charge penalties on the pending payments. On this, 39 percent of the respondents said 18 percent, 29 percent said it is more than 18, and 32 percent found it up to 14 percent.



9

Conclusion

- Need for a proactive and responsive grievance handling.
- Need to create more awareness on reform process, role of RERC and the available grievance redressal mechanism.
- Need to promote more consumer participation, which is a concern even after 12 years of reforms.
- Need to take intensified steps to stop power pilferage and to improve quality of service, which would ultimately reduce consumer dissatisfaction.
- The high tariffs and corruption among utility employees were observed as main reasons for power theft. Immediate and stern action is required to be taken on these issues.
- Poor service delivery was accounted as the major reason for consumers not reaching to electricity services. To resolve this issue, consumer consultation process should be simplified and widely disseminated.
- Many issues mentioned above require collective engagement, which is quite different from grievance redressal that usually works on individual basis. While collective engagement helps in identifying and solving long term general problems and if the situation is ripe in setting long term goals and objectives, grievance redressal is concerned with mostly complaints of individuals on certain service point.
- To increase the number of public hearing at urban as well as rural area with wider announcement.
- Collaboration with NGOs will be one of the way for ensuring people's participation.
- Alternate source of energy should be promoted among commercial units to foster efficiency to protect the consumer from monopoly.

Annexure 1

Project Partners

S. No.	District	District Partner	Nodal Person	Contact No.
1.	Banswara	Vagad Vikas Sansthan 3/16, Ratti Talai, Banswara – 327 001	Nemraj Shehlot	Phone: 02962-244781 Mobile: 9414103139 (Malot) 9887144675 (Shehlot) Fax: 02962-244781 Email:vagad_vikas@rediffmail.com; malotavdhesh@gmail.com
2.	Chittorgarh	CUTS Centre for Human Development (CUTS CHD) Rawla, Senthia, Chittorgarh - 312 025	Dharmveer Yadav	Phone: 01472-241472 Fax: 01472-247715 Mobile: 9829285938 (Madan Giri), 08890841068 (Dharmveer) E-mail: chd@cuts.org; dy@cuts.org
3.	Bundi	Richmonds' Kala Sahitya and Shikshan Society Tilak Chowk, Old Post Office Street, Bundi - 323 001	Rajeev Saxena	Phone: 0747-2444124 Mobile: 9461332814 Email: rajivshawari@yahoo.co.in

Contd...

S. No.	District	District Partner	Nodal Person	Contact No.
4.	Kota	Oxford Shikshan Prashikshan Vikas Sansthan House of Munshi Mohd. Yasin, Hiran Bazar, Chandra Ghata 50, Kota – 324 006	Anwar Ahmed Khan	Phone: 0744-2501712 Mobile: 93514 99789/ 9314629282 Email: anwar.kotasw@gmail.com
5.	Jodhpur	Native Institute of Desert Awareness and Knowledge Society (NIDAN) 9B/2, Opp. Bishnoi Dharmashala, Near Mangal Tower, Ratanada Jodhpur – 342 011	Tejveer Choudhary	Phone: 291-2100742 Mobile: 94132 49745 Email: nidanjodhpur@gmail.com; c_tejveer@rediffmail.com
6.	Jalore	‘SANKALP’ Sansthan Hospital Road P. - Ahore, Jalore – 307 029	Mahendra Kumar Ojha	Phone: 02978-222312 (R) 222147, Fax: 222966 Mobile: 9414534193 Email: sankalpsansthan6@gmail.com
7.	Churu	Manav Pragati Sansthan Usmanabad Colony Behind New Bus Stand, Churu – 331 001	Pradeep Poonia	Phone: 01562-258054 Mobile: 9414665855 Email: mpsrajgarh170@yahoo.co.in

Contd...

S. No.	District	District Partner	Nodal Person	Contact No.
8.	Tonk	MMM Sikshan Evam Jan Seva Sansthan Khoja Bawari, Near Police Line, Tonk – 304 001	Gopal Lal Saini	Phone: 0143-2687730 Mobile: 9829347200/ 9214167972 Email: mmmsansthan_tonk@rediffmail.com
9.	Dholpur	Samajik Vikas Samiti VP- Attarsuma (Baseri) Distt. Dholpur – 328 022	Rakesh Kumar Parmar	Phone: 05646-272012 (O) Fax: 05646-266263 Mobile: 9784016835/ 9460646335 Email: svsdholpur@gmail.com
10.	Alwar	Shubham Mahila Prashikshan Sansthan Aate Wali Gali Alwar- 301 001	Sushila Devi	Phone: 0144-2345295 Mobile: 08890991173 (Sushilaji) 09783376432 (Vikas) Email: smahilasansthan@yahoo.com
11.	Dausa	K.B. Social Welfare Society Nidhivan Colony, Near Shyam Mandir, Nai Mandi Road, Dausa – 303 303	Kamlesh Kumar Bohra	Phone: 01427-220684 Mobile: 9414271208 Email: kbmsvskamlesh10@gmail.com
12.	Sikar	Jila Upbhokta Jagaran Samiti H. No. 548, Sector 10 Anand Nagar, Sikar – 332 001	Satya Narain Sikhwal	Phone: 01572-252705 Mobile: 9414039705 9928106349 (Mukesh) Email: mukesh.sikhwal@yahoo.com

Annexure 2

Survey Questionnaire

PART-A: Background of the Respondents

1. Name of the Respondent:
2. Address:
3. Telephone/mobile number (mention the std code as well):
4. E-mail address, if any:
5. Educational Qualification:
 1. Less than primary level
 2. Primary level
 3. Secondary/higher secondary level
 4. Graduation level

PART-B: Level of Awareness of Respondents with regard to Electricity

1. Questions related to general information
 - 1.1 Are you an electricity consumer?
(i) yes (ii) no
 - 1.2 If yes, then to which of the following category of consumers do you belong?
 - a. Domestic
 - b. Non-domestic
 - c. Agriculture
 - d. Industrial (medium and heavy)
 - e. Any other category, then please mention

- 1.3 If you are not an electricity consumer, then please mention the reasons as why it has not reached to you?
- (i) Exorbitant price
 - (ii) Lack of proper infrastructure
 - (iii) Do not consider the service to be useful
 - (iv) Any other reason (please mention)
-

2. Questions pertaining to Electricity Regulatory Commission and related issues

- 2.1 Do you know about Rajasthan Electricity Regulatory Commission?
(i) yes (ii) no
- 2.2 If yes, then are you aware of its functions?
(i) yes (ii) no
- 2.3 Have you ever participated in public hearings conducted by Electricity Regulatory Commission?
(i) yes (ii) no
- 2.4 Are you aware of the fact that Electricity Regulatory Commission has given a time limit to all distribution companies, which render all types of electricity services to consumers?
(i) yes (ii) no
- 2.5 Do you know about Lokseva Guarantee Act 2011?
(i) yes (ii) no
- 2.6 Has Feeder Renovation Programme been able to address the problem of electricity supply?
(i) yes (ii) no

PART-C: Level of satisfaction of Respondents with regard to Electricity Services

- 1. Few questions related to deterrence as well as complaints against proper electricity supply**
- 1.1 Are you aware of the fact that a separate grievance redressal mechanism (GRM) has been set up by Electricity Company for the purpose of resolving complaints?
(i) yes (ii) no

- 1.2 If yes, then are you aware of its functions?
(i) yes (ii) no
- 1.3 Have you ever lodged a complaint under GRM?
(i) yes (ii) no
- 1.4 Are you aware of the time limit that has been set up to solve complaints under each GRM?
(i) yes (ii) no
- 1.5 If yes then, are you satisfied with the course of actions taken on your complaint?
(i) yes (ii) no
- 1.6 If you have never filed any complaint pertaining to the issue of electricity supply, then mention the reason for not doing so?
(i) Never felt the need to file a complaint
(ii) Do not think that filing a complaint would ever resolve the issue
(iii) Due to a huge time lapse between the time of filing a complaint and getting it resolved
(iv) Any other reason (please mention the reason)
-
- 1.7 Are the electricity companies maintaining a separate complaints register as well as a separate complaint box to register complaints?
(i) yes (ii) no
- 1.8 Do electricity companies issue an acknowledgment receipt to the complainant on receiving complaints from the complainant?
(i) yes (ii) no
- 1.9 Are you aware of the fact that recently Electricity Police Stations have been set up?
(i) yes (ii) no
- 1.10 Have you ever filed a complaint in any of such stations that have been set up?
(i) yes (ii) no

- 1.11 If yes, then are you satisfied with the way the stations have addressed your complaints?
(i) yes (ii) no
- 1.12 Are you aware of the electricity ombudsman and its functions?
(i) yes (ii) no
- 1.13 If yes, then have you ever filed an appeal regarding any complaint that you had filed?
(i) yes (ii) no
- 1.14 Were you satisfied with the decision given by the ombudsman?
(i) yes (ii) no
- 1.15 If no, then have you ever filed a complaint against the decision given by the ombudsman in District Consumer Forum?
(i) yes (ii) no

2. Few Electricity Connection related questions

- 2.1 Within how many days, did you receive electricity connection, from the time you had issued a request as well as a demand note?
(i) 10 to 15 days
(ii) 15 to 30 days
(iii) More than 30 days
- 2.2 Has the electricity company, at the time of issuing electricity connection to you, separately charged for expenses incurred on service line as well?
(i) yes (ii) no
- 2.3 Are you aware of the fact that you can for the purpose of your domestic livelihood receive electricity from small scale industry division, and for the purpose of availing electricity connection in your shop can receive electricity from domestic division?
(i) yes (ii) no
- 2.4 Does the electricity company warn you about disconnecting the connection 15 days before the date of disconnecting the connection?
(i) yes (ii) no

2.5 Did the electricity company return the security money back to you in time, when you got your connection disconnected?
(i) yes (ii) no

2.6 Has the electricity company given compensation for the loss caused by the high voltage in electricity supply to you?
(i) yes (ii) no

3. Questions related to electricity supply

3.1 Do you face the following problems related to electricity supply frequently?

(i) Insufficient electricity supply

a. yes b. no

(ii) Poor quality of electricity supply

a. yes b. no

(iii) Problem of high voltage, which damages electrical appliances

a. yes b. no

3.2 When the electricity transformer in your locality gets burnt, then within how many days does it get replaced by a new transformer?

(i) 1 day (ii) 2 days

(iii) 3 days (iv) 7 days

3.3 In case of a fault caused in electricity line, within how many days does it get repaired or replaced?

(i) 1 day (ii) 2 days

(iii) 3 days (iv) 7 days

4. Few questions related to electricity meter

4.1 Do you face the following problems related to electricity meter frequently?

(i) Fast running and rapid change in the reading of the meter

a. yes b. no

(ii) The meter never works properly

a. yes b. no

(iii) The meter gets faulty quite frequently

a. yes b. no

4.2 Do you file complaints whenever your meter stops working?

(i) yes (ii) no

4.3 If yes, then do the employees of electricity companies check the meter?

(i) yes (ii) no

4.4 Do the employees of electricity companies charge you for checking the meter?

(i) yes (ii) no

4.5 After checking the meter, within which of the following time intervals is the meter repaired or replaced?

(i) Within 7 days (ii) Within 7 to 15 days

(iii) More than 15 days

4.6 Does the electricity company pay you 5 percent of the cost as compensation for taking more than the prescribed time limit to get the meter replaced?

(i) yes (ii) no

4.7 How many times does the electricity company conduct a regular electricity meter check-up?

(i) Once in 1 year (ii) Once in 2 years

(iii) Once in 5 years

4.8 Out of the two types of meters, electronic meter that is being used currently or the old meter which was used before, which do you think is the better one?

(i) Electronic meter (ii) Old meter

5. Few questions related to electricity bill

5.1 Do you regularly receive electricity bill?

(i) yes (ii) no

5.2 If yes, then do you find the bill to be completely correct?

(i) yes (ii) no

- 5.3 Are you satisfied with the information that is provided to you in your electricity bill?
 (i) yes (ii) no
- 5.4 Are you satisfied with the amount to be paid that has been mentioned in the bill?
 (i) yes (ii) no
- 5.5 Do you complain to the electricity company when you are not satisfied with the electricity bill?
 (i) yes (ii) no
- 5.6 Are the proceedings on your complaints conducted properly and within the specified time limit?
 (i) yes (ii) no
- 5.7 How much time does the electricity company take to resolve your complaint?
 (i) 1 day
 (ii) 2 days
 (iii) 3 days
 (iv) More than 3 days
- 5.8 At what percent does the electricity company charge interest on the pending amount, if there is any?
 (i) 14 percent
 (ii) 18 percent
 (iii) More than 18 percent

Name of the person conducting the research: _____

Organisation (name, address and contact information):

Date: _____

Time: _____