



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
NATIONAL CAPITAL TERRITORY OF DELHI

COMMITTEE ON PETITIONS

FOURTH REPORT OF THE SIXTH ASSEMBLY

SUBJECT: IN THE MATTER OF ALLEGED INFLATED WATER BILL
BY DELHI JAL BOARD IN GREATER KAILASH

PRESENTED ON 02nd DECEMBER, 2019

ADOPTED ON 3RD DECEMBER, 2019

Legislative Assembly, Old Secretariat, Delhi – 110054

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COMMITTEE ON PETITIONS

(2019-20)

COMPOSITION OF COMMITTEE

1. Sh. Saurabh Bhardwaj	CHAIRMAN
2. Sh. Pankaj Pushkar	MEMBER
3. Sh. Akhilesh Pati Tripathi	MEMBER
4. Ms. Bhavna Gaur	MEMBER
5. Ms. Bandana Kumari	MEMBER
6. Ch. Fateh Singh	MEMBER
7. Sh. Girish Soni	MEMBER
8. Sh. Raju Dhingan	MEMBER
9. Sh. Shri Dutt Sharma	MEMBER

Assembly Secretariat:

1. Shri C. Velmurugan	Secretary
2. Shri Sadanand Sah	Deputy Secretary
3. Shri Manjeet Singh	Deputy Secretary

PREFACE

1. I, The Chairman of the Committee on Petition having been authorized by the Committee to present on their behalf, this Report on the petition received from Sh. Vijay Sanghvi and Sh. W.D Mathur r/o C-73, (FF), G.K-I and C-113, (FF), G.K.-I, respectively at Greater Kailash, Delhi-110048, countersigned and presented by Shri Raju Dhingan Hon'ble MLA, Trilok Puri and referred to the Committee on Petitions by the Hon'ble Speaker, Delhi Legislative Assembly. The Petition alleged highly inflated water consumption bills by Delhi Jal Board in Greater Kailash area.
2. The committee considered and adopted the Draft Report at their sitting held on 29.11.2019
3. The observations/recommendations of the Committee on the above matter have been included in the Report.
4. I would like to thank all the Members of the Committee for their continued guidance.
5. The Committee places on record their profound appreciation for the valuable assistance rendered by Sh. Sadanand Sah, Deputy Secretary, Sh. Manjeet Singh, Deputy Secretary, Sh. Subhash Ranjan, Section Officer, Ms. Ilma Mirza, Associate Fellow, Delhi Assembly Research Centre (DARC) and other staff of the Delhi Assembly Secreteriat in preparation of the report.



Date: 30.11.2019

Place: Delhi

(SAURABH BHARDWAJ)
CHAIRMAN
COMMITTEE ON PETITIONS

GENESIS

The Urban Water Supply and the sanitation in National Capital Territory (NCT) of Delhi is the sole responsibility of the Delhi Jal Board (DJB). DJB was established by the Delhi Water Board Act 1998 by the Parliament, and the earlier fragmented divisions of Delhi Water Supply and Sewage Disposal Undertaking were incorporated jointly to form DJB. The Board acts as the para-statal authority for all the capital works, operations & maintenance and revenue functions related to water supply within the NCT of Delhi.

DJB is responsible for retail distribution of water in the areas under the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD), while it supplies only bulk water to areas under New Delhi Municipal Corporation (NDMC) and Delhi Cantonment Board. Though, DJB carries out all the functions of urban water supply and sanitation in NCT of Delhi, any charge or hike in tariff has to be approved by the state government.

In recent times, the government has taken many steps to ensure affordable and accessible supply of Water like Free Water up to 20,000 litres per month and Water Rebate Scheme 2019. But it is indeed unfortunate to witness issues related to inflated Water Bills that are emerging even after the numerous efforts by the government.

With the understanding of roles and responsibilities of DJB and considering the severity of the issue, the Committee on Petitions carried out its proceedings on the received Petition which highlights the grievances related to inflated Water Bills.

INTRODUCTION

1. Sh. Vijay Sanghvi and Sh. W.D Mathur submitted a petition alleging various highly inflated water consumption bills by Delhi Jal Board in Greater Kailash Area. The Petition was countersigned and presented to the Hon'ble Speaker, Delhi Legislative Assembly by Sh. Raju Dhingan MLA vide letter dated 21.04.2019. The petition was referred to the committee on petitions on 29.04.19.
2. The petitioner levelled allegations against Delhi Jal Board with enclosed copies of water bills received by Ms Padma Jain, Ms Promila Verma and Shri S.S Verma, residents of C-73 & C 113, Greater Kailash.
3. The Petition also mentioned that the Consumer; Sh. Vijay Sanghvi paid the Jal Board bill on March 27, 2019, and he also received a message stating no dues are pending. But he still got the bill of Rs 91,966, which distressed the Petitioner. Therefore, he approached the Committee on Petitions seeking the necessary actions to redress his grievance.

PROCEEDINGS

1. In order to ascertain the facts and investigate the allegations levelled in the said Petition, the Committee on Petitions conducted its meeting on 11.11.2019 and deliberated the matter comprehensively with the officers of Delhi Jal Board(DJB).
2. To examine the facts and investigate the allegations levelled in the said petition the committee proceedings were primarily aimed at understanding the reasons for highly inflated water bills.
3. The Committee requested the Chief Executive Officer, Delhi Jal Board to kindly furnish comments by 16.05.2019 on the same vide letter no. F.No.24 (25)/Petition(10)/2019-20/LAS-VI/Leg./4152-55 on 07.05.2019.
4. In response to the letter dated 07.05.2019, Shri. R.S. Godbole, Director (Revenue), Delhi Jal Board responded vide letter dated 17/05/2019. The details of highly inflated water consumption bills of two addresses which were mentioned in the petition are as follows:

Name of Consumer	K. No.	Bill Amount	Explanation
Sh. S.S. Verma (C-73, (FF), G.K.-I, 1 st Floor)	0129941000	Rs. 471/- (up to 07.03.2019)	SPML Meter installed. Bill Generated as per actual consumption and the same was paid by the consumer on 27.03.2019. The property has been purchased by the present owner long back and he has not mutated the water connection in his name that is why he is getting the bill. There is a possibility of interchange of the bills as the bills of First Floor and the Second Floor are in the same name i.e. Sh S.S. Verma, the original owner.

<p>Sh. S. S. Verma (C-73, (SF), G.K.-I, 2nd Floor)</p>	<p>1129941000</p>	<p>Rs. 91, 966/- (up to 12.04.2019)</p>	<p>The Present owner has purchased this flat long time back and not mutated the water connection in his name. The connection at site is plugged which has not informed to the DJB nor water connection has been got disconnected as a result of which billing is done but the consumer is not making any payment. Therefore arrears of Rs.91,966/- (upto 12-04-19) accumulated including LPSC. Bill is raised on policy average basis. The last payment against this connection has been made by the consumer on 07-05-2013</p> <p>N.B. The basic problem pertaining to this grievance is that both the consumers of 1st Floor and 2nd Floor have purchased the property long time back but no one has got the connection mutated in their respective names and therefore at times bills made get mixed up unless the consumer is unaware of his K.No. the premise also has a Borewell which feeds off the floors and as per information by the 2nd Floor occupant, they are also using water of the Borewell without knowing that the water connection is plugged. The Position has been explained to the consumer.</p>
<p>Smt. Promila Verma (Ground Floor)</p>	<p>0939941000</p>	<p>Rs. 34, 738/- (up to 09.02.2019)</p>	<p>As per reading verified, the meter has been installed wrongly i.e. reverse meter installation by M/s. SPML. The bill is raised on policy average basis. M/s. SPML was advised to replace the meter and the team has gone for meter replacement but the consumer has</p>

			refused to get the meter replaced and insisting upon that DJB should install the meter. It may be mentioned here that M/s. SPML is a DJB contractor working on behalf of DJB only. Further, there is no representation or grievance registered by the consumer. Last payment made by the consumer was on 08-12-2016 and no payment after that.
Smt. Promila Verma (First Floor)	0939941000	Rs. 1, 14, 537/- (up to 07.03.2019)	The consumer has not made any payment after 08-12-2016 resulting in accumulation of arrears and LPSC there on.No grievance registered by the consumer. Further, there is no representation or any grievance registered by the consumer. However, the Consumer has been advised that if she feels the meter reading is fast, she can have the meter tested after depositing the requisite meter testing fee of Rs 150.

5. In the meeting held on 11.11.2019, the DJB representative informed the Committee that there are two most common reasons for wrong Billing of Water Consumption by DJB;

- i) If a consumer does not make payment which results in the accumulation of arrears
- ii) Since the readings of the Meters is collected by the application using the tabs, there are times when there's no signal, then it has to be done manually which may lead to error in the reading

OBSERVATIONS

The committee observes that there is a discrepancy between the allegations in the petition and the statements given by Delhi Jal Board, which needs further inquiry. Following observations are brought on record:

1. After examining the Report submitted by the DJB on 07.05.2019, the Committee observes that it is mentioned that the Owner of the Property has not mutated the Water bill in his name and there's a possibility of interchange of the bills as the Bill of the First Floor and Second Floor are in the same name i.e. Sh. S.S. Verma. This submission makes the Committee flabbergasted and exhibits the negligence on the part of SPML. The Committee also regards the fact this is just one instance which has come up in the light but also speculates whether there are more such cases. If yes, then it can cause huge distress among people.
2. The Report highlights that the Consumer i.e. Smt Promila Verma r/o C-113 (GF) GK I disagreed to get the Water Meter installed by M/s. SPML which is a Contractor of DJB. The Committee believes that it is highly likely that the Consumers are not aware of the collaboration of SPML and DJB and may have apprehensions regarding the quality and credibility of the Meters from SPML.
3. The Committee is of a view that the Team who went to install the Meters by SPML should have communicated effectively by carrying a copy of authorization letter by DJB.
4. As per the discussion held in the meeting on 11.11.2019, the reasons that were given by DJB do not seem satisfactory for the highly inflated water bills.
5. The Committee has also observed that the Petitioners have not approached DJB directly and have not raised their grievances there, which also did not provide an opportunity to DJB to rectify (if any) error or to explain their take on it.

6. The Committee observed that around 80,000 customers are being provided bill related service by contractor named SPML. There are numerous complaints against SPML as observed in other Committees as well. The SPML does not have enough staff and willingness to generate timely bills for the consumers. The bills are generated abruptly and consumers are often shocked to receive high amount of bills by SPML.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The Committee recommends that Delhi Jal Board should enquire in the functioning of SPML and submit the explanation for the inflated water bills within 30 working days from the adoption of this report by Delhi Legislative Assembly. Also, appropriate penalty should be levied on SPML.
2. The Committee recommends that Delhi Jal Board should ensure that the M/s Subhash Projects and Marketing Limited (SPML) should never be permitted for any business with GNCT of Delhi.
3. The billing of the affected consumers who were under SPML should be studied and mechanism should be devised to provide relief to consumers who feel cheated by the practices of SPML.
4. The Committee requests Worthy Chief Secretary of GNCT of Delhi to submit Action Taken Report on the recommendations of the Committee, to Delhi Legislative Assembly within 30 working days of adoption of this report.



Date: 30.11.2019

Place: Delhi

(SAURABH BHARDWAJ)

CHAIRMAN

COMMITTEE ON PETITIONS