

Consumer Advocacy:

One of the main intentions of the Electricity Act is to promote and protect the interests of Electricity Consumers. Greater responsibility has been vested with the State Electricity Regulatory Commissions to support the Consumer Interests. This Commission recognizes that, Consumer participation in electricity regulatory process is necessary and important to ensure transparency and accountability. The Electricity Act, 2003 requires the Regulators to consult consumers on important policy and regulatory matters before arriving at any decision.

Section 94 (3) empowers the Commission, to authorize any person, as it deems fit, to represent the interests of the Consumers in the proceedings before it.

APERC has enacted regulations to put in place, Consumer Grievances Redressal Forums (CGRFs) at each Distribution Company, and Vidyuth Ombudsman at State Level to address the grievances of the Consumers.

This Commission intends to take up Consumer Advocacy as an initiative for creating awareness among the Consumers about the Power Sector and the Regulatory process, thereby ensuring Consumer participation in the Electricity Regulatory process. Consumer Advocacy is aiming to enlighten the consumers about the regulatory mechanism, make their voices heard in the proceedings before the Commission and enhance their role in the functions of the Regulatory Commission.

Objectives

- To represent consumers' interests in all matters relating to power sector before the Commission by getting feedback from consumer representatives.
- To act as a source of information to consumers of electricity and provide them with the necessary guidance on various power related issues
- To conduct survey of performance standards of licensees for the benefit of consumers and to pass such information to the Commission.
- To ensure that all decisions and actions in the power sector in the state are not just consumer friendly but also environment friendly.
- To protect the interests of all categories of electricity consumers.
- To empower consumers to effectively participate in the regulatory processes.

Main Functions of Consumer Advocacy:

1. To empower consumers to participate effectively in the Regulatory Process
2. To represent Consumers on all matters relating to power sector.
3. To act as a Source of information to the Consumers on the issues of Electricity.
4. To arrange workshops and Training programmes for Consumer Advocacy Groups /NGOs /Self Help Groups (SHGs)
5. To publish News letters, fact-sheets and other informative material for the information of the Consumers.
6. To handle grievances and Complaints of electricity consumers received in the Commission and to arrange to conduct survey and publish reports on the issues related to Consumer services.
7. To disseminate information through use of TV, Media, Radio and print media.
8. To work as an interface between the Commission and the Consumers and bring out relevant issues to the knowledge of the Commission for protection of Consumer Interests.
9. To guide the Electricity Consumers the State, with regard to their Rights /Obligations, Grievances redressed mechanisms etc.