

RECORD OF PROCEEDING

DATE OF HEARING : May 15, 2007 at 11.45 hrs
CASE No. : 8 of 2007
PETITIONER : Shri. Ravindra K. Choudhary

MATTER : Application filed by Shri. Ravindra K. Choudhary for uninterrupted supply of power to agricultural pumps (especially for banana cultivation) other than planned load shedding hours.

Shri. Ravindra K. Choudhary, Taluka Raver, District Jalgaon, has filed an application on May 7, 2007, seeking directives upon MSEDCL for uninterrupted supply of power to agricultural pumps (especially for banana cultivation) other than planned load shedding hours. The Commission scheduled the hearing of the matter on May 15, 2007 in the presence of consumer representatives authorised on a standing basis under the Electricity Act (“EA 2003”). Notices were issued accordingly.

2. At the admissibility hearing held in the matter on May 15, 2007, Shri. Ravindra K. Choudhary submitted that he is a social worker and is also involved in banana cultivation for the last 25 years. Shri. Choudhary submitted that the district of Jalgaon is known for the cultivation of bananas and Raver Taluka contributes to almost 40% of the total banana production in Maharashtra. This large-scale cultivation of banana in Raver Taluka contributes to the employment of other industries that are dependant on banana cultivation. Shri. Choudhary submitted that presently, while the temperature from the month of April 2007 has risen considerably, each banana tree requires 25 to 35 litres of water per hour. However, due to MSEDCL subjecting agricultural consumers of Raver District to load shedding for 15 to 18 hours per day, banana growers in the said area are not able to provide requisite quantities of water to banana trees continuously. While this water is drawn through motors, the prolonged hours of load shedding have adversely affected the agricultural potential of Raver District. On an enquiry made by the Commission, Shri. Choudhary submitted that MSEDCL should be directed to provide continuous supply of electricity for atleast 15 hours to the agricultural consumers of Raver Taluka, which would enable the supply of 25 to 35 litres of water through electric

water pumps. Further, MSEDCL should submit a load shedding plan for the ensuing year, atleast 4 months prior to implementation, so that agricultural consumers in Raver District are able to pre-plan the supply of water for banana cultivation.

3. The Commission enquired of Shri. Choudhary whether the implementation of lift irrigation scheme would benefit the interests of banana growers in Raver Taluka. Shri. Choudhary submitted that the lift irrigation scheme is essentially applicable in the cultivation of sugarcane. Unlike sugarcane, banana trees require daily and continuous watering. However, on the implementation of the lift irrigation scheme for 15 hours in Raver Taluka, banana growers may be in a position to efficiently utilise the supply of water for banana cultivation.

4. Shri. Gaurav Joshi, Counsel for MSEDCL, submitted that the issues raised by the applicants are generic in nature as the huge demand-supply gap prevailing in Maharashtra has affected every industrial sector in general. The interests of the applicants were considered by the Commission at the time the load shedding protocol was revised by the Commission. Further, the Commission should consider that the distribution losses in Raver Taluka are to the tune of 56%.

5. The Commission observed that due opportunity had been provided to consumers, stakeholders and all concerned while the load shedding protocol was being revised. The Commission further observed that should the agricultural consumers of Raver Taluka, especially banana cultivators, require electricity supply more than the requirement of other agricultural consumers in Maharashtra, they should take necessary steps to separately generate that amount of additional supply of power through captive generators. Any exemption from the existing load shedding protocol would not be allowed. Shri. Choudhary submitted that various agricultural consumers/farmers have already set up diesel generators. These diesel generators are employed as a last resort since the generators consume at least 8 to 10 litres of diesel (amounting to Rs. 400/-) for per hour supply of electricity. The Commission observed that the banana cultivators in Raver

Tulaka may use diesel generated electricity supply feeder-wise, during the load shedding period. Further, banana cultivators of Raver District may approach the concerned authorities for availing governmental subsidy while incurring expenditures for diesel generation.

6. Shri. Ramesh Nagraj Patil, an agricultural consumer from Raver District, submitted that banana trees require 20 to 22 litres of daily watering. Banana trees die if not watered for 3 to 4 days on a continuous basis. Since banana cultivation requires continuous supply of power for atleast 15 hours per day, the implementation of lift irrigation scheme may not be helpful in this regard.

7. Shri. D.J. Mahajan, a banana cultivator from Raver District, submitted that diesel generated supply of power is a long-term solution. The banana cultivators of Raver Taluka require instant solutions for adequate supply of water, especially in the present summer season. The Commission observed that diesel generated supply of power is essentially a short-term solution. Banana cultivators who cannot avail supply of power through express feeders (which amounts to Rs. 16/- per unit), may generate electricity on their own as the later is economical. On the issue of distribution losses amounting to atleast 56% in the area of Raver Taluka, Shri. Mahajan submitted that banana cultivators are in no way responsible for the same.

8. Shri. V.K. Thadvi, a banana cultivator from Raver District, submitted that the Commission should atleast ensure that MSEDCL provides continuous power supply for 12 hours in Raver Taluka upto mid-July 2007, considering the plight of the banana cultivators in the said area. Shri. M.K. Deore, MSEDCL, submitted that MSEDCL should be able to complete the feeder separation in Raver Taluka within December 2007. The Commission observed that voluntary steps should be initiated by banana cultivators in Raver District to reduce the volume of distribution losses existing in the said area.

9. Shri. Ubhabhai Tadavi and Shri. Damodar Mahajan, agricultural consumers of Raver Taluka submitted that electricity should be reasonably used in Mumbai so that no hurdle is caused to the agricultural potential of Maharashtra.

The hearing in the matter concluded thereafter.

List of the persons who attended the hearing held in Case No. 8 of 2007 on May 15, 2007 from 11.45 hrs to 12.30 hrs

1. Shri. M.K. Deore, MSEDCL.
2. Shri. N.K. Kshivsaya, MSEDCL.
3. Shri. U.G. Ganar, MSEDCL.
4. Shri. S.R. Patil, MSEDCL.
5. Shri. N.V.V. Ydande, MSEDCL.
6. Shri. U.M. Patil, MSEDCL.
7. Shri. Kiran Gandhi, Advocate for MSEDCL.
8. Shri. Gaurav Joshi, Counsel for MSEDCL.
9. Shri. Ravindra K. Choudhary.
10. Shri. Dinkar Kulkarni.
11. Shri. Ramesh N. Patil.
12. Shri. S.C. Patil.
13. Shri. D.G. Mahajan.
14. Shri. C.A. Dhande.
15. Shri. K.B. Meelhe.
16. Shri. D.Y. Mahajan.
17. Shri. U.K. Tadavi.
18. Shri. S.B. Patil.
19. Shri. Sopan Patil.
20. Shri. Sanjay Pawar.
21. Shri. Yogesh Bhangare.