



# AHAR Connect



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## AHAR is fighting single handed battle to get lower prices for electricity in Mumbai city and suburbs

### Forever News

Agreement with Tata Power consumers. The PPA, they claimed,

**Mumbai:** The Indian Hotel and Restaurant Association (AHAR) has vehemently opposed unjust tariffs charged by the Brihanmumbai Electric Supply and Transport (BEST) undertaking from electricity consumers in Mumbai and by Reliance Energy and TATA Power in suburb. Two senior AHAR members, Guruprasad Shetty and Kamlakar Shenoy made separate representations to the Maharashtra Electricity Regulatory Commission (MERC) over the issue in May 2016 during public hearing in Mumbai.



**Guruprasad Shetty and Kamlakar Shenoy senior members of AHAR pioneered the fight against injustice in electricity distribution and differential charges levied in Mumbai city.**

In their presentations, AHAR has alleged that BEST is charging highly inflated rates from consumers since the undertaking is buying power from Tata Power-G plant at almost double the rates than those available in the open market. BEST inked the Power Purchase

Company at a time when raw material or fuel was much higher in the international market. Thanks to the slump in oil prices globally, Tata Power, they alleged, is now receiving fuel at almost 70 to 80 percent lower rates but the benefit is not being passed to its end

was signed without following the mandatory procedure of competitive bidding. As a result, BEST is buying electricity at Rs 4.41 per Kilowatt Hour (KwH) from Tata Power-G which is supplying power to distributors in Gujarat at almost half the rate- Rs. 2.20 per KwH.

While solar power is available at Rs 5.68 per KwH, BEST is buying the same at Rs. 8.56 per KwH, they added.

This problem is further aggravated by arbitrary levy of 'Fixed Charges' of Rs 250 per domestic consumer and Rs 500 per commercial consumer by the BEST. Earlier BEST charged a nominal Re 1 and Rs 2 respectively as the 'Fixed Charge' which was hiked randomly. The presentation aptly highlights to the MERC that BEST is been charged Rs 4.41 per KwH for electricity sourced from TATA Power while consumers in Goa pay only Rs 3.15 per KwH for power bought from the National Thermal Power Corporation.

AHAR has prayed to the MERC that it should probe into the false declaration on oath that BEST has made claiming that it is Local Authority. AHAR has also alleged that BEST has falsified accounts for



inflating its O&M expenses causing a loss to consumers and indulging in illicit profiteering, that BEST has falsely projected inflated costs despite electricity being available at lower rates from Tata Power G and other sources, flouting the rule on charging off-peak rates from consumers and levy of arbitrary 'Fixed Charges'. In addition, BEST is also accused of allegedly investing money collected from its power supply division in banks and funds of "dubious nature" and (Continued on page 2)



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# AHAR is fighting single handed battle to get lower.....

(Continued from page 1)

alleged misappropriation of funds amounting to some 1,100 Crores.

Another major bone of contention between AHAR, the BEST and MERC is the Transport Division Loss Recovery (TDLR) charged from its consumers. The undertaking charges above 20-25 percent of the bill amount as the TDLR to defray what it terms as losses stemming by operating the BEST bus service in Mumbai. AHAR contends that consumers-domestic and commercial are in no way responsible for losses incurred by BEST due to improper operation and mismanagement

of its bus services and hence, the TDLR charge should be abrogated.

While BEST is engaging unfair trade practices in its power supply business, Tata Electric Co (TPC) is also not above board, AHAR alleges. They pointed that

the same entity performs both the tasks. The company was said to have amassed around Rs 480 Crores last year, as a result. AHAR has further alleged that TPC and BEST have formed an electricity cartel and the two are charging excess from power consumers in

lines, where they do not have the required infrastructure. The Electricity Law explicitly forbids levying of such charges on consumers and states that the provider is responsible to bear any such expense arising out of its inability to provide

by authorizing TATA Power to levy the "Wheeling Charge" on consumers.

Also questionable is the offer by the TATA Power to offer electricity at lower rates to "switchover" consumers, who wish to migrate from other suppliers. AHAR has questioned why TATA Power has not extended the benefits of lower charges to its existing customers, in line with the reduced tariffs chargeable from new ones.

It is noteworthy that AHAR is battling BEST and TPC single-handed while the benefits of reduction of at least 29-25 percent in power tariffs will be available to all electricity consumers in Mumbai, should the apex body of hoteliers and restaurateurs, win the case ●



Tata Power Distribution is also indulging in unfair accounting practices and is gaining extra but illicit revenues by separating its power generation and distribution businesses though

Mumbai. TATA Power is also accused of charging consumers in Mumbai the "Wheeling Charge" or fees payable for using a third party's power transmission

a proper power distribution network. Hence, such a levy is illegal, AHAR contends. AHAR alleges that the MERC had overstepped its jurisdiction and violated the Electricity Act

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# Modern technologies are essential for every restaurant

## Forever News

**Mumbai:** Every restaurateur, permit room, bar and pub owner in the city and suburbs wishes to run a successful operations requires an excellent staff- especially those who are attentive and sensitive to the needs of various segments of visitors. In addition, seamless operations and technology that is easy to use by the service crew. Technology will determine the rate of success of all restaurants in years to come. Simply put, restaurants and other such outlets who incorporate high yet easy to use technology will gain an upper hand in their business over their rivals.

There is a wide range of technologies available that can help streamline functions and help restaurants gain that defining edge. One of them is software for employee management. Such systems and software helps

owners to efficiently rotate their staff for optimal performance. This technology is particularly useful in Mumbai where staff attrition rates are high due to various reasons.

The second software which is readily available in India is for inventory management. This helps restaurateurs and business owners to know the exact quantity of beverages and drinks, foodstuff and other items such as condiments and spices that are yet to be served or utilized. Keeping a proper inventory helps restaurateurs to know which items are nearing expiry and need to be sold off on a top priority basis- which can be done through a slew of special offers and promotions- which not only help popularize the restaurant and its cuisine but also helps gain loyal customers. For example, a 'Happy Hour' rate can be offered on select food and drinks regularly. Breweries and liquor distributors willingly offer

special prices to restaurants which promote their brands.

In addition, keeping tabs on stocks also helps proper relations with suppliers and vendors and any undue disappointment to clients due to non-availability of a particular drink or food item. It helps restaurateurs in proper budgeting of their resources and optimal use of their finances.

Software that facilitates restaurant crew to expedite orders is also available. In these, those handling the customer directly simply key in repeat orders which are then flashed to the bar or the kitchen. This software is particularly useful for bars since drinkers tend to repeat their orders for beverages and mixers. In Indian restaurants, the software can greatly help cooks engaged in preparing various kinds of 'roti' and breads as they can work on an order swiftly.

Restaurateurs in Mumbai



are waking to the benefits of introducing Point of Sale (POS) machines on their premises. Though the merchant bank levies a nominal fee ranging between two and four percent on every transaction made by the restaurant for payments made through credit and debit cards, restaurateurs will find it worthwhile to invest in POS machines: Because plastic

currency is fast gaining ground in Mumbai and it is well known that clients paying on their cards tend to spend fairly more than what they would have spent in cash. For some reason, restaurants and similar facilities that accept card payments are also held in better esteem by customers that those who do not and also help develop customer loyalty ●



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# Getting rid of 'stress' at your restaurant quickly

**Forever News**

**Mumbai:** Diners in India and specially Mumbai have become more conscious about the ambience of the restaurant where they dine or walk in with friends and relatives for a few drinks. Regardless of the time of the day, customers now look for a relaxed ambience. This is particularly true in Mumbai and its suburb where people live by the clock and look for a break from their hectic schedules.

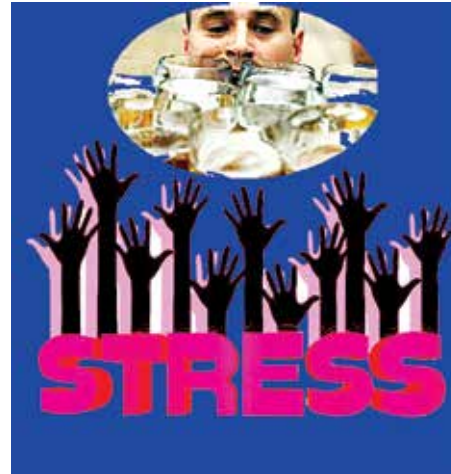
Hence, the challenge for restaurateurs and bar owners is- how to provide such a relaxed, cheerful ambience for their customers and yet maintain a service speed that is efficient and swift. Customers nowadays frown at service crew running about the restaurant floor with trays overloaded with orders to serve one or more tables. Clients are no more amenable to listening to the buzz and clutter of the busy kitchen restaurant. And least of all, customers are no longer indifferent to the aromas of cooking that waft from the kitchen and pervade the dining areas. Such challenges are not easy to overcome considering the staffing constraints with which restaurants in Mumbai operate.

Some steps that restaurant owners can take to prevent their premise resemble the accidents and emergency unit of a public hospital are: Ensure proper distribution of tables and service area to waiters. This ensures proper distribution of work load. It is well known that certain spots in a restaurant or bar attract more customers than others due to a variety of reasons. As a result, restaurateurs tend to deploy their 'heavy duty' or more efficient staff for such locations within the premises to cater to the high demand for service. Such staff can get overwhelmed by the sheer number of orders from customers in their area and hence, will appear stressed. In such situations, it would pay to deploy another waiter serving in a lesser crowded area to assist his or her colleague as a un-stressing measure.

Customer service crew, have to be trained to conduct their business in a manner that appears sans stress and is yet efficient. Waiters running around the dining area are not a palatable sight to any customer. The manner in which waiters

present themselves also plays a major role in giving an unstressed look and feel to a restaurant. Regardless of their smiles, stress will reflect on a waiter's face rather eloquently. It is therefore best to ensure that such crew have adequate intervals to get rid of their work stress by providing them an area where they can relax for brief intervals, if required. Waiters are also to blame: In several cases, they overdo their service in the hope of a fat tip from a known customer or a new prospect.

The overall ambience of a restaurant plays a great role in providing the relaxed feel and look to the place. Customers who walk



in for a relaxed afternoon lunch or a quiet evening drink generally do not favor places where noisy action movies are screened on a TV. Nor do they prefer cacophonous music- such as modern Bollywood fare- blaring out of the restaurant's music system. The same holds true for customers who are enjoying a meal or drink with their friends: they are unable to hold private conversations due to high decibels.

Wall décor and livery and illumination of a restaurant also help in improving the overall relaxed ambience that customers nowadays look for while seeking an escape- albeit brief- from their hectic life ●

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