

Power co suppressing info demanded under RTI?

By Tushar Tere
TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Vadodara: Does the Madhya Gujarat Vij Company Ltd (MGVCL) follow standard rules while setting up safety devices in the electricity distribution transformers in the city?

The frequent power failures and electric shocks suffered by citizens stirred Vipul Patel, who runs Aastha Charitable Trust here, to demand this information from the central Gujarat power company under the Right to Information Act (RTI). Patel also asked whether MGVCL follows Bureau of Indian Standard (BIS) rules, which are mandatory while setting up the transformers.

However, his application was rejected by MGVCL officials, who refused to provide the information. "I wanted to know whether MGVCL follows all the specifications while

setting up safety devices in distribution transformers in the city. And if it follows, who ensures that qual-

ity material is used," said Vipul. "However, the officials refused to divulge the details stating that it was a policy matter."

MGVCL's written reply to Vipul's queries stated, "We cannot provide you the information regarding 14 distribution feeders under Alkapuri sub-division and 15 feeders under the Vishwamitri sub-division."

"The information regarding rules sought by you is stated in The Electricity Act 2003 book, which is available in market," was the reply

to a query regarding the rules followed by MGVCL.

"The distribution feeders (transformers) are set up in public place. There is no reason for holding back the information regarding the material used in it," Vipul said.

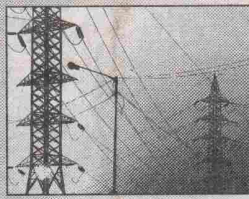
"Despite collecting all the relevant charges from the citizens for setting up the transformers, the power company doesn't follow safety specifications stated in Electricity Act," alleged Vipul. "It's mandatory to construct an earthing chamber under every feeder and fence it properly. But it is not being followed by MGVCL. Even the lightning arrest equip-

ment is not affixed to the feeders and electricity poles."

MGVCL chief engineer MN Patel, however, said, "We follow all the rules specified under the Act. Also, the quality of material used in the feeders is excellent and matches Bureau of Indian Standards specifications." When asked whether the information sought was categorised as confidential by CGVCL, Patel said, "I will have to look in to the matter."

Anup Shukla, a senior official at MGVCL, too said that the company follows all the specifications and safety rules while installing the transformers.

However, Vipul said, "A deputy executive engineer of Alkapuri division told me that GUVNL is spread across a vast area and hence it was okay to flout some rules." He has written to the appellate authority and sought the reasons for rejection of his application.



Consumer's query on safety devices cold-shouldered

MGVCL speeds up transformer upkeep following Centre directive

By Tushar Tere/TNN

Vadodara: Frequent power cuts during monsoons might soon be a thing of the past for citizens. Considering the abysmal condition of power transformers set up across the city, the Union ministry of power has asked the Madhya Gujarat Vij Company Ltd (MGVCL) officials to refurbish the transformers.

And acting on the order, the officials have initiated a major drive, wherein all the 3,500 transformers will be repaired and refurbished within the next couple of months. However, senior MGVCL officials said that it was a routine maintenance exercise.

"Union joint secretary of energy, Arvind Jadhav, has pulled up MGVCL officials for not utilising the funds allocated by the Centre, to maintain the power

transformers. He said that the installation of the transformers was not up-to-date," said a MGVCL engineer. "In a meeting on August 31, Jadhav asked the officials to attend to the transformers at the earliest."

POWER REPRIEVE

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The rap made the officials swing into action immediately. "We have been asked to repair all the transformers within next one month. It's an arduous task, but we will try to finish it before the deadline," added the engineer. Under the drive, MGVCL will fix earthing chambers, nut-bolts, jumpers and safety nets around the transformers.

The electrical equipment installed on these transformers is funded by the Centre and a report on the utilisation of these funds is submitted to the power ministry on a regular basis. Managing director of MGVCL, Anoop Shukla, however, denied knowledge of any

such drive. "It's a routine maintenance exercise and we do it regularly. It's being done to provide uninterrupted power supply to the citizens." When asked whether the power ministry has pulled up MGVCL officials, Shukla said, "The officials have just been asked to improve the maintenance of the power transformers."

Shukla also added that MGVCL has fully utilised the funds provided for maintenance and power cuts have reduced drastically over the last few months.

Interestingly, MGVCL officials had earlier refused to divulge the details of safety standards followed while installing the transformers, stating that it was their policy matter. The information was sought by Vipul Patel of Aastha Charitable Trust and TOI had reported the issue a month ago.

A senior engineer also added that the lack of staff has severely hampered maintenance work. "With no additional staff being added, it becomes very difficult to maintain thousands of transformers," the engineer said.