

Beyond the Meter: Understanding Consumer Satisfaction with Torrent Power in Bhiwandi

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Abstract:- This thesis investigates consumer satisfaction with Torrent Power, an electricity distribution company operating in Bhiwandi, Maharashtra, India. It examines how various factors, including pricing, billing transparency, service quality, and grievance redressal, influence consumer perceptions and satisfaction. By employing a mixed-methods research design, this study explores the complexities of consumer-utility relationships in the Indian context. Findings reveal that while customers appreciate certain aspects of Torrent Power's services, concerns about pricing, billing clarity, and power outages significantly impact overall satisfaction. Recommendations are provided to enhance customer experience and improve Torrent Power's service delivery.

This research contributes to the growing body of literature on consumer satisfaction in the electricity sector by providing insights into the specific challenges and opportunities faced by a distribution company operating in a developing country context. The findings of this study have implications for policymakers, industry practitioners, and consumer advocacy groups seeking to improve the performance of electricity distribution utilities.

Keywords:- Pricing, Billing Transparency, Service Quality, Grievance Redressal, Torrent Power, Electricity Distributer, Consumer Satisfaction

I. INTRODUCTION

Demand Side Management (DSM) comprises a range of policies, strategies, and measures that are tailored to the attitudes of electricity consumers. These attitudes are a result of a combination of perceptions and expectations shaped by pertinent information regarding the advantages of switching to sustainable electricity consumption.

Unbundling of the vertically integrated utilities and privatization are two of the changes introduced to make the power business more efficient. The Indian electricity industry has been experiencing financial losses and lack of consumer satisfaction which lead to negative attitude among consumer. The Distribution Franchisee model is one of the models that has developed in the distribution sector since the industry's establishment in India. Among them is the Distribution Franchisee model. The paper illustrates how a private sector company changed a downward vicious cycle into a virtuous cycle by reducing the distribution transformer failure rate,

and increasing consumer satisfaction by providing timely and quality service which resulted in a reduction in aggregate technical and commercial losses using the example of the Distribution Franchisee, Torrent Power Limited in Bhiwandi, Maharashtra (AT&C). The combination of long-term capital investment in network infrastructure with customer-centric management.

The most recent model in the distribution sector reform process is the Distribution Franchisee model, which is being used by the Maharashtra State Electricity Distribution Company (MSEDCL) in its Bhiwandi circle. This arrangement is unique in that it permits a private corporation to oversee a franchisee area's distribution operations without undergoing any significant legal or structural changes. This structure is notable for a few reasons, including the use of input rate as a bidding element, indexing licensee revenue to tariff changes, and the licensee providing little to no financial support. Due to its potential to quickly reduce technical and commercial losses in the distribution sector, this model has attracted a lot of interest and is being evaluated as the next stage of distribution reforms.

The distribution industry in the state of Orissa was fully privatized in 1999. The privatization of Delhi's distribution industry came next in 2002. The most significant modifications to the Indian power sector's policy structure occurred in 2003, with the implementation of the Electricity Act of 2003, which created further possibilities for private involvement in the distribution industry. The Distribution Franchisee plan came into effect in the MSEDCL's Bhiwandi circle in 2007. This is the most current model in the Indian power sector's distribution reform process and an innovative framework for collaboration between the public and private sectors.

Bhiwandi, home to one-third of all power looms in India, is an essential textile hub in the western region. Within a 721 square kilometer area, it covers around 1.6 lakh subscribers. The circle's anticipated consumption is 750 MVA, and its yearly power input is roughly 2600 million pieces. The power loom industry accounts for over 55% of total sales, and Maharashtra's government offers substantial subsidies to power loom users. The town has a history of persistently missing electricity bills for almost a decade, and it has experienced exceptionally large Aggregate Technical and Commercial (ATC) losses (about 60% in 2006–07). Additionally, the region has a history of political unrest.

➤ *Significance of the Study:*

This study will help to find out level of satisfaction among customer of torrent power Bhiwandi. This will also help to identify what are variables that impact level of satisfaction of customer. The study will also make clear how different variables impact on satisfaction level. The study will recommend ways to increase level of satisfaction.

➤ *Objective of the Study:*

- To analyze and understand the establishment and performance of Torrent power in Bhiwandi.
- To examine level of consumer satisfaction among customer of torrent power Bhiwandi
- To examine the impact of pricing model on level of consumer satisfaction.
- To explain the various parameters that impact level of consumer satisfaction of torrent power Bhiwandi.

➤ *Hypothesis:*

- H0: There is no relation between price and level of satisfaction.
- H1: there is a relation between price and consumer satisfaction.
- H0: there is no relation between customer grievance handling system and customer satisfaction.
- H2: customer grievance handling system have great impact.
- H0: customers are not satisfied with torrent power
- H3: Customer are satisfied with customer.

II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

➤ *The research is Based on Both the Data i.e Primary Data and Secondary Data*

- Primary Data: to achieve above mentioned objective primary data collected through google form and also personalized interview with commercial customer conducted where feel necessary.
- Secondary Data: secondary data collected through various sources such as website (Including institutions website), journals, newspaper and through research articles also.

- Data Analyses and interpretation: for data analyses and interpretation central tendency and average method is used.
- Universe and Sample: Customers: As of March 31, 2019, Torrent Power serves over 7.66 lakh (766,000) customers in the Bhiwandi region. There are a variety of residential, commercial, and industrial customers in Bhiwandi. Interestingly, a sizable portion of customers are classified as C&I (commercial & industrial).
- Sample: data collected from 200 residential customer and 50 commercial and industrial customer.

III. FINDINGS

➤ *Respondent Demographic:*

The research conducted from the various respondent which are from residential as well as commercial background out of total respondent 61.1% male and 37% female were there. Beside this 81% customer are connected with torrent power since last six years. The response who filled the survey form are from different areas of Bhiwandi such as Gabinagar, Shantinagar, Shastri Nagar, Millat Nagar, Anjurphata, Damankar Naka and many more.

Following are the parameters on which level of satisfaction determined in this study.

➤ *Outages and Interruption in Power Supply:*

As per the data collected during the study it was clear that 38.9% customer feel that there is outage and interruption in power supply very frequently, 31.3% think it is occasionally, 22.7% customer feel that rarely there is any outage however 7.1 percent customer said they don't feel any outage since from last many days. The outage or interruption can be there because of various reason such as maintenance, poor climatic condition, power theft and many more.

Torrent power is trying the level best to control such outages and interruption through various measures such as Torrent Power replaced busbar distribution boxes with theft-proof joints at about 1,200 locations, mostly in the Bhiwandi area. Additionally, some 250 switchgear installations, such as auto reclosers and ring main units (RMUs), were automated.

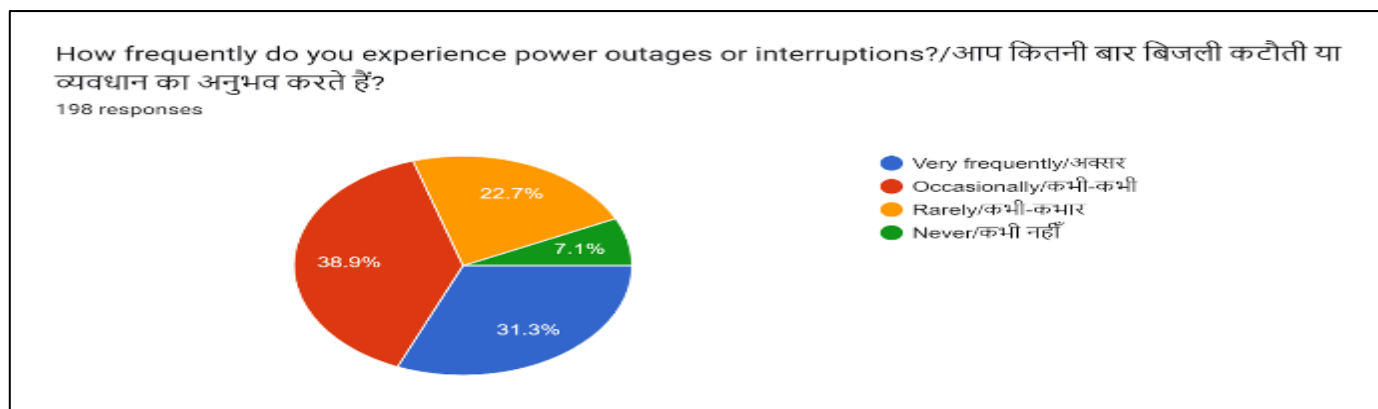


Fig 1: Frequency of Power Outrage

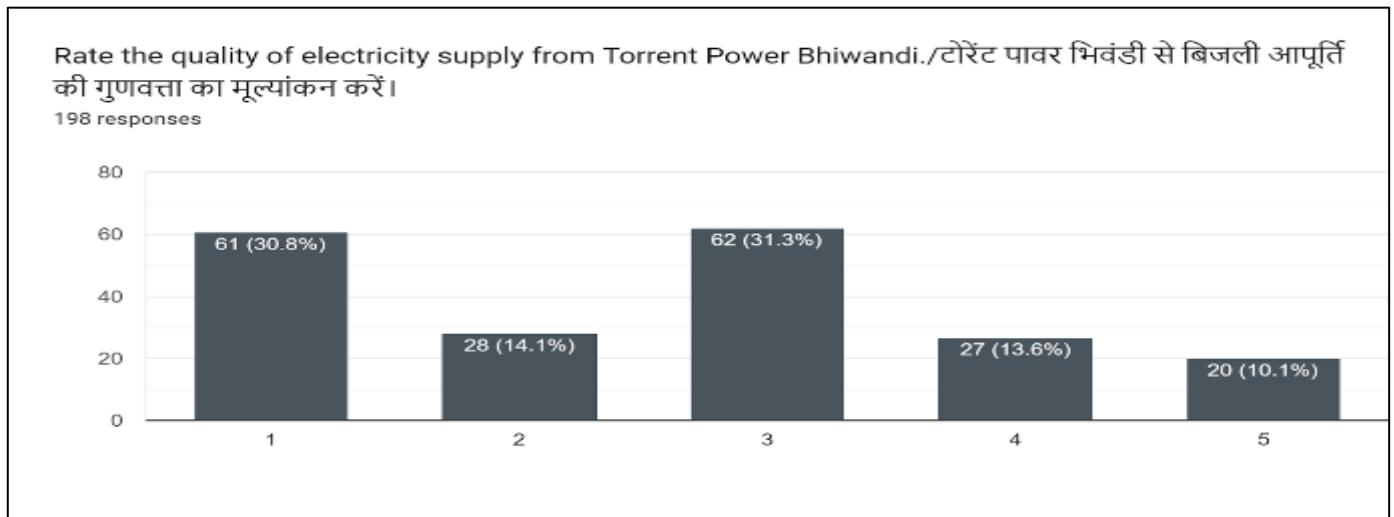


Fig 2: Quality of Electricity Supply

➤ Quality of Electricity Supply:

Customers Shows mixed reaction towards quality of power supply by torrent power. out of total respondent 30.8% customer feel that service quality of torrent power is poor 28.14 customer responded that it is dissatisfactory, 31.3% customers have neutral attitude toward quality of service 13.6% customer feel that the service quality of torrent power is good whereas 10.1% customer feel it is excellent. The above mention data shows lack of satisfaction among customer on the basis of service quality.

To improve service quality torrent power is employing various strategies. Within the next four to five years, Torrent Power hopes to reach a 5 gigawatt (GW) renewable energy capacity. Their combined capacity, including both operational and under-development units, is currently 2 GW. Torrent Power consistently makes investments in programs to improve power quality and dependability. They manage to maintain one of the lowest Transmission & Distribution (T&D) losses in the nation because to technology advancements and SCADA automation.

➤ Customer Support and Responsiveness to Customer Complaints:

This study specifies that 78.7% customer reported that they have faced issues with torrent power services where as 21.3% reported they don't have any service issue. During the study it was also found that 14.6% customers think that responsiveness of customer support is not good at all however 22.2% customer are said it is not very responsive, 29.3% customers are neutral about the same 23.2% customer feel torrent power have a great responsiveness and 10.6% customers are in the opinion that employees of torrent power are very responsive towards the customer support and addressing the queries of complaint.

However to improve customer responsiveness and to handle grievances properly torrent power has taken various initiatives such as they have started mobile van service to solve complaint of rural customer and also provide bills payment facility. Beside this active website which provide instant channel to solve various customer issues. Torrent has also started toll free number to have direct communication with customer care representative who will redress grievances on various issues.

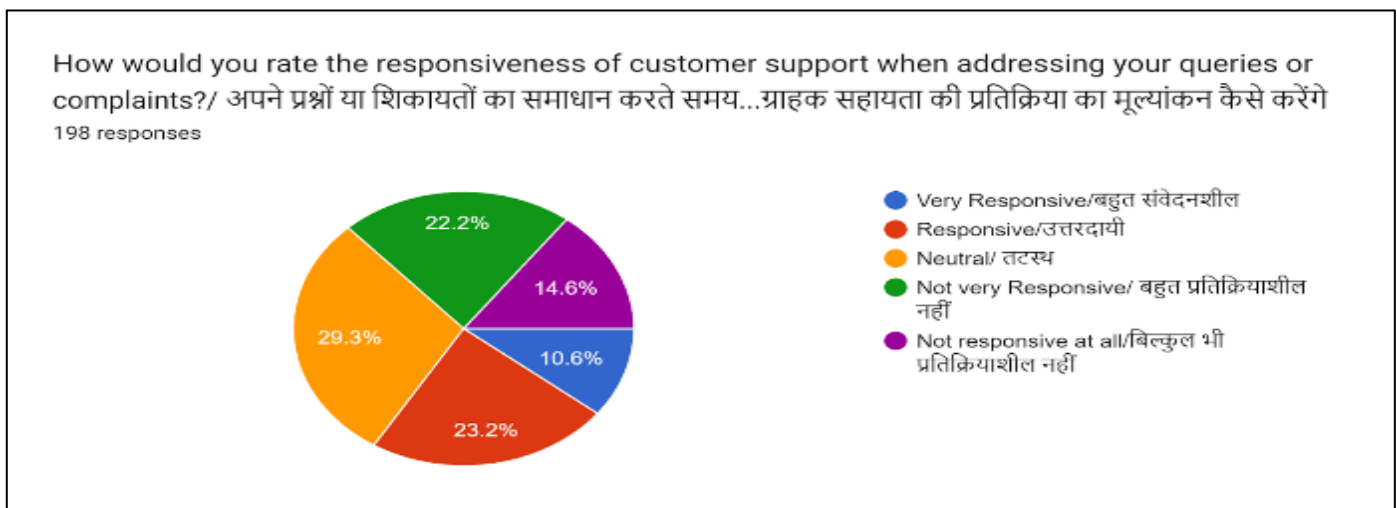


Fig 3: Responsiveness of Customer Support

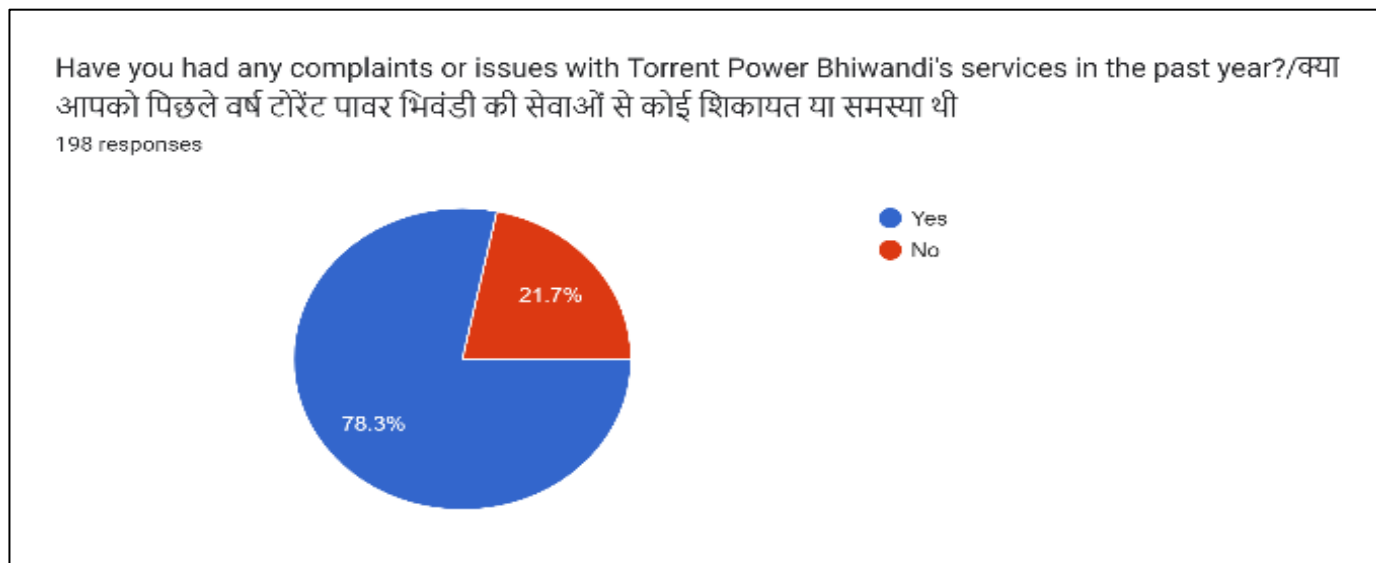


Fig 4: Complain or Issue

➤ *Transparency of Billing Mechanism*

During the study it was found that 25.3% think that the billing mechanism is not transparent at all whereas 23.2% customer feel that it needs some transparency 23.7% customer are neutral about the same 20.7% customer think that the billing mechanism has transparency and 7.1% customers think that the billing mechanism is very clear and transparent.

In order to improve billing mechanism torrent power has introduce some measures such as customer get detail knowledge through bill as well as SMS/Email about total unit consumed by them during a billing period (that is month).Torrent deliver bill on mail/SMS and through personal delivery also. Even it also provide detail bifurcation of bill such as per unit rate, tax, other charges etc. if customer have any query they can approach service provider in anyway.

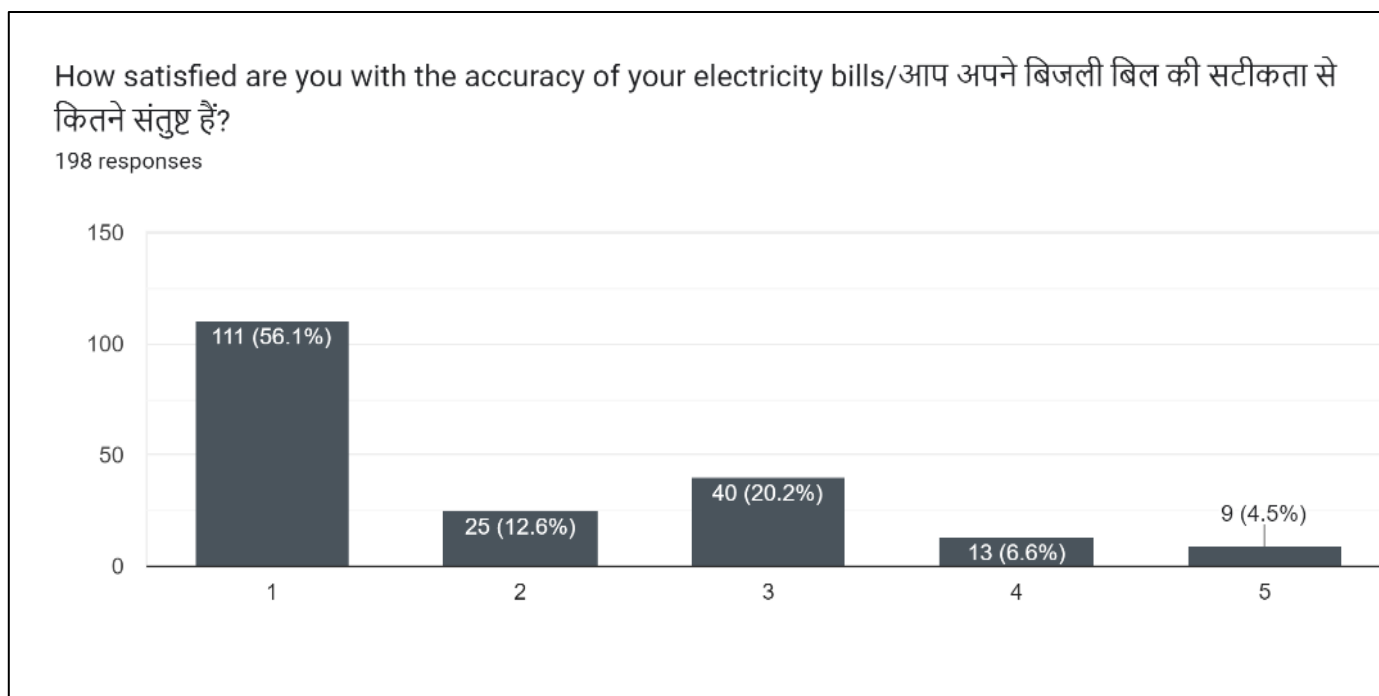


Fig 5: Accuracy of Billing

➤ *Payment Method by Torrent Power:*

Torrent power all the payment option to their customer. Customer can choose both online and offline mode of payment. Offline method have two options namely payment and billing center and through mobile Van. However

customer can also make online payment through Debit/credit card, internet banking, UPI and others. Despite of all this things When question asked about the convenience of method of payment 54.5% people show negative reaction whereas 45.5% people shows positive attitude toward the same.

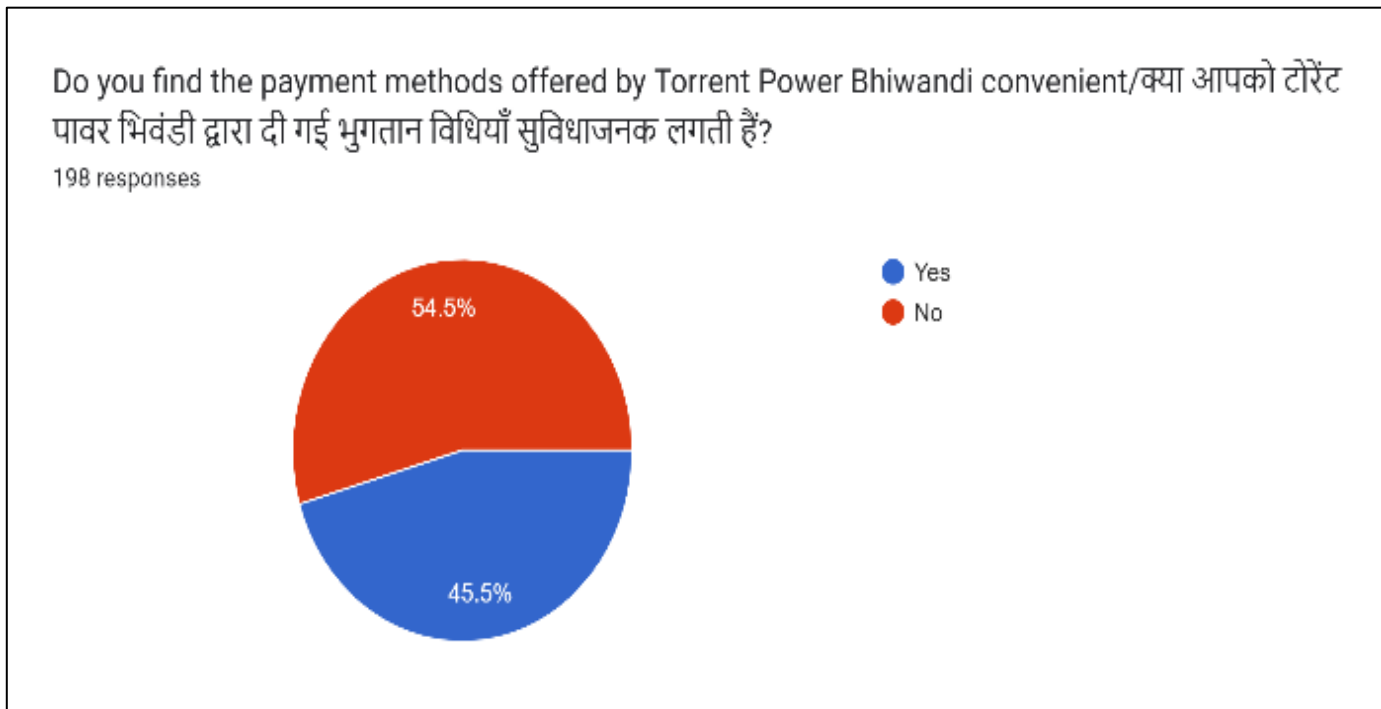


Fig 6: Convenience of Payment Method

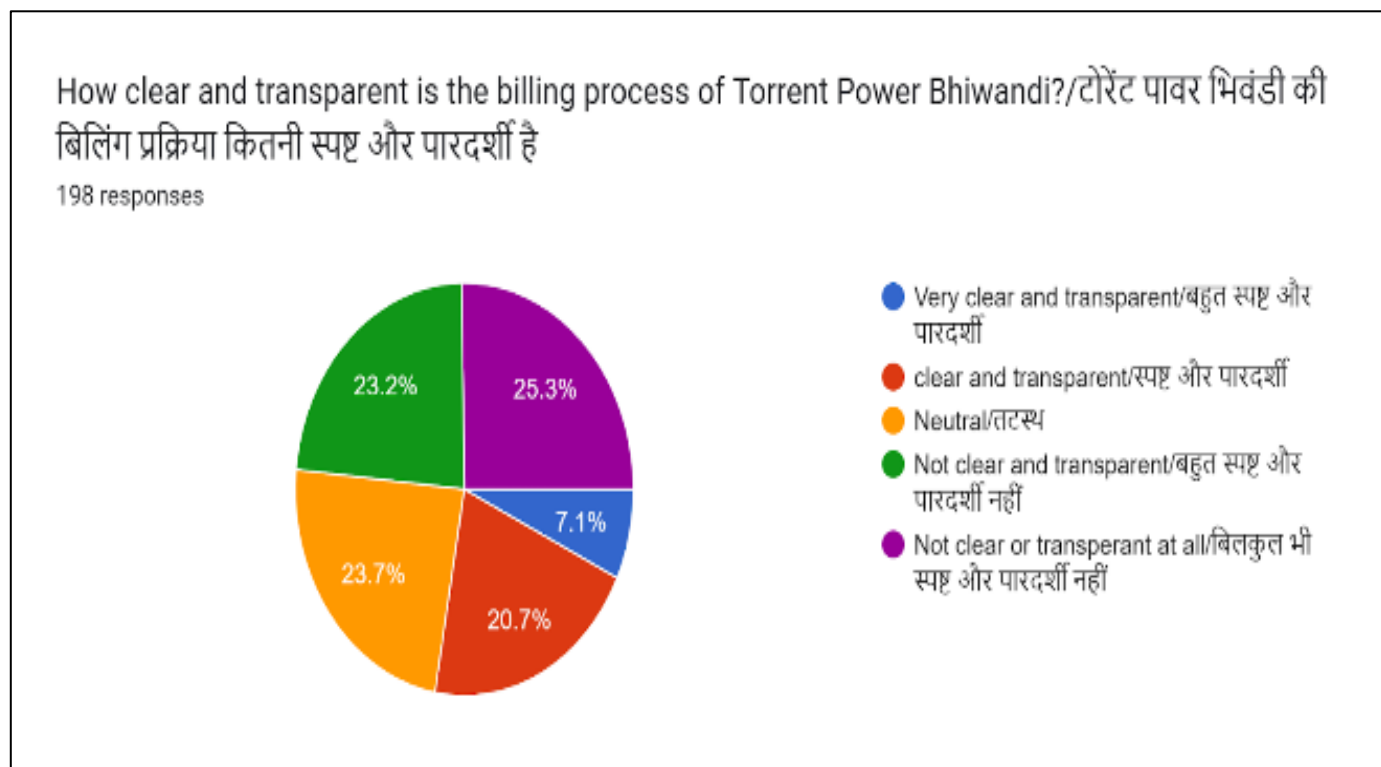


Fig 7: Transparency of Billing Process

➤ *Level of Overall Customer Satisfaction*

On the basis of all the above-mentioned parameters respondent asked to state about overall satisfaction they feel with services offered by torrent power. During the study it is recorded that 24.7% customer are extremely dissatisfied with

services provided by torrent power, 20.2% customer are dissatisfied, 28.8% have neutral attitude toward services, 20.2% are satisfied and 6.1% customer feel extremely happy with services provided by torrent power.

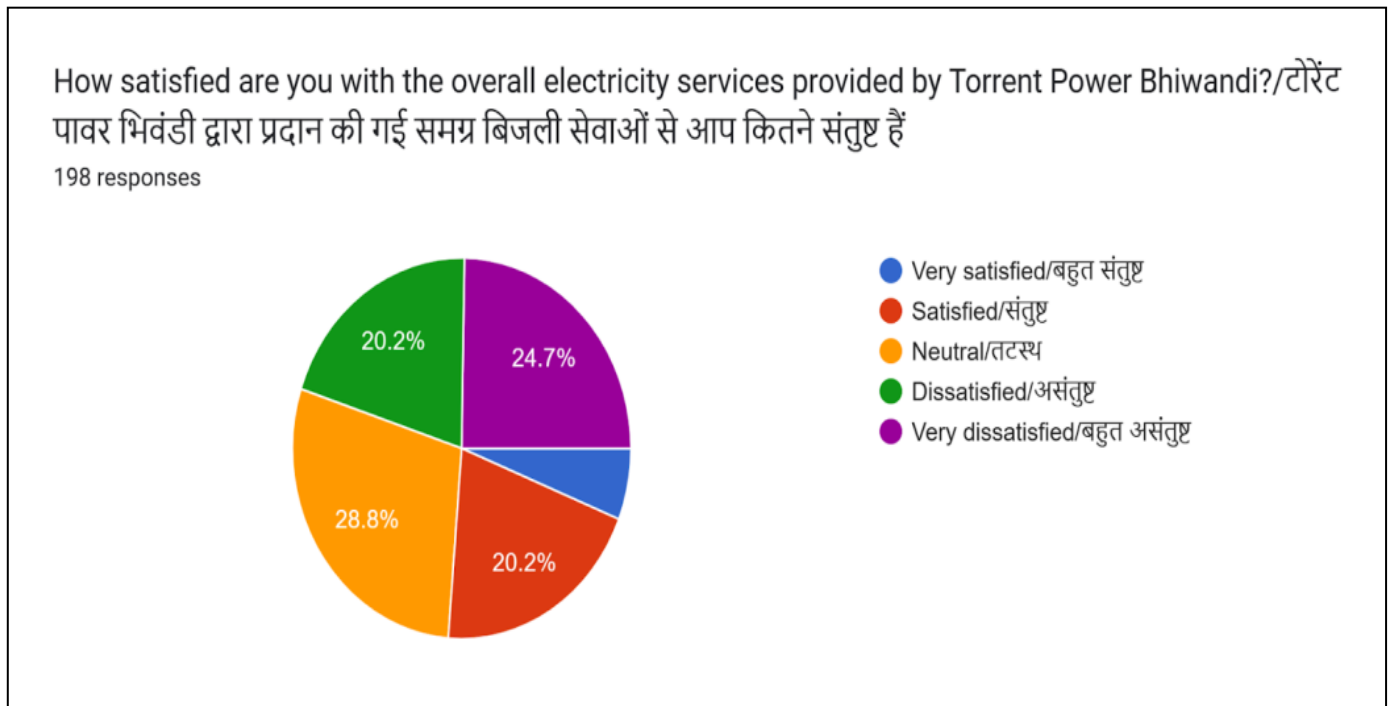


Fig 8: Overall Satisfaction Level

IV. CONCLUSION

- Consumer Satisfaction and consumer attitude are the result of the perception and expectation that consumer have with service provider. Hence service provider must satisfy Expectation of customer.
- Some of the parameter used in the study to judge Consumer satisfaction and attitude toward Torrent Power Bhiwandi are Pricing model, payment convenience, transparency of billing mechanism, frequency of outage and interruption, quality of electricity, grievance handling mechanism , method of payment collection and so on.
- Throughout the study it found that Pricing is the vital factor that impact on consumer and maximum consumer of torrent power are not satisfied with the pricing strategies. As many consumer thinks pricing style is not just.
- It is also found that consumer are happy with grievance handling system.
- Many of customer are satisfied with quality of service but some customer think there is service discrimination by torrent.
- Payment method provided by Torrent power are Convenient to consumer as it provide all option to urban and rural customer.
- If ignore people having neutral response maximum customer are not satisfied because of many reasons

V. LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

- Limitation of data, as data on many important variable is missing as well as company was not providing all data.
- Sample comprises of maximum representative from residential background and only 25% from commercial sector.

Further Scope of the Study: as the study gives general idea about attitude & level of satisfaction of all customer, further study can be done for residential or commercial customer or one can also conduct study to examine level of customer satisfaction among some specific sector such as Power loom of Bhiwandi Moti industry or warehouses etc.

VI. SUGGESTION

- Service provider should improve relation with customer
- Proper pricing strategy must be design and there must be transparent billing mechanism.
- Company should take measures to reduce power theft.
- There must well established Cutomer support system and responsiveness to customer complaints.
- Service provider must have interaction with customer specially rural customer so that both parties can understand each other.

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