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BEFORE THE CONSUMER GRIEVANCES REDRESSAL
FORUM (CGRF), GOVERNMENT OF GOA,
ELECTRICITY DEPARTMENT, VIDYUT BHAVAN,
4TH FLOOR, VASCO, GOA.

Complaint/Representation No. 07/2020/193

Shri. Appasaheb Dindalkumpi,
C/o Dr. Deepali Dindalkumpi,
Flat No. 105, Sun & Sand Apts,
Candolim - Goa.

..... Complainant

V/S

1. The Chief Electrical Engineer,
Electricity Department,
Government of Goa,
Vidyut Bhavan, Panaji, Goa.
2. The Executive Engineer,
Electricity Department,
Div - VI, Mapusa - Goa.
3. The Assistant Engineer,
Electricity Department,
Div - VI, **S/D II**,
Porvorim - Goa.

..... Respondents

Present:

1. Complainant appeared in person
2. Shri. Sidney Costa

..... for the Respondent

Dated: - 07/01/2021.

ORDER

Per Smt Sandra Vaz e Correia, Independent Member.

1. This order shall dispose complaint dated 27.02.2020 filed on 03.03.2020. The complainant is a senior citizen. He is availing the

Sandra Vaz e Correia

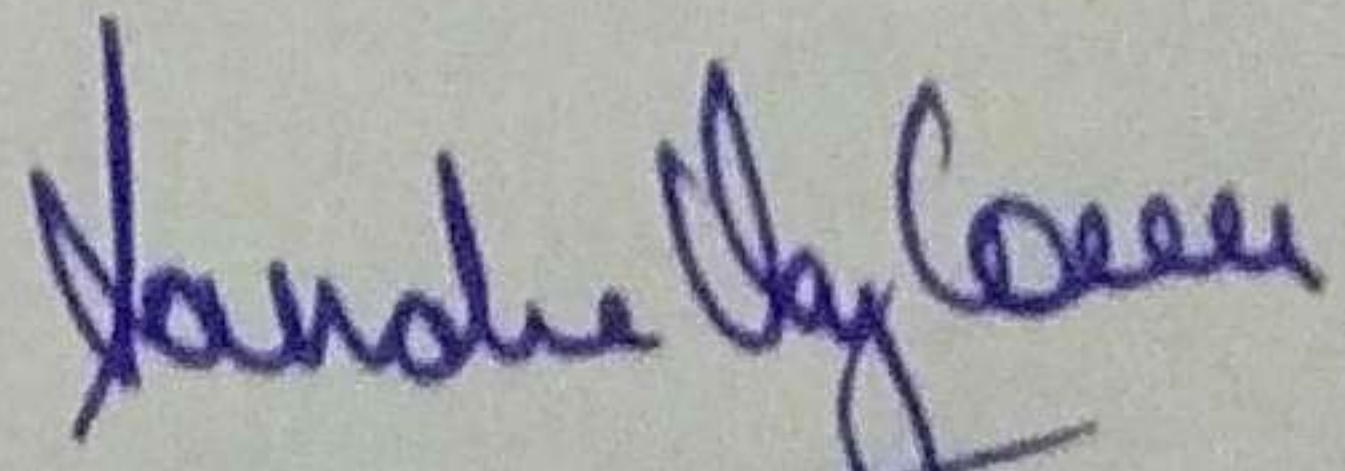
electrical installation in the name of Shri Mahadev R. Bhonsle at Manaher Verem under CA no. 60005966472. He is aggrieved by the inflated bills issued since June 2019 when the premises were closed. It is his case that the electricity connection was tapped and power drawn by neighbours since June 2019. As a result, he received a bill of about Rs. 30000/-. On being informed, the Department inspected the meter and allegedly found that it showed active power consumption despite the house being closed and showed signs of tampering. A complaint of alleged theft of electricity by neighbours came to be lodged with Porvorim Police Station on 19.02.2020. Copies of disputed bills and photographs of the meter were enclosed.

2. The complaint is contested by the licensee Department who filed their reply through AE (Com) Porvorim. It is their case that the installation was inspected on 13.05.2020 at which time it was found that the service connection wire from department mains was cut at the meter terminals, hence question of theft did not arise. The premises appear to be not in use for a very long time and is in a dilapidated condition and was found locked on inspection. The complainant was contacted on his mobile phone regarding the inspection, but he expressed his inability to come as he was not residing at the premises/installation for a long time. A detailed billing statement was submitted by the Department for the period 18.08.2018 to 12.05.2020. The Department requested for dismissal of the complaint as it appeared to be a private dispute and not pertaining to any billing dispute and that there were other remedies available.
3. The parties were called for a hearing at which time the complainant appeared in person alongwith his daughter Dr Deepali Dindalkumpi, while Shri Sidney Costa AE represented the Department. I heard them at length.
4. The complainant impugns the bills dated 13.06.2019 for Rs. 15555/- and dated 10.10.2019 for Rs. 30004/-. The bill dated

Sidney Costa

13.06.2019 shows previous reading as "0" and current reading as 2503 units. The second bill dated 10.10.2019 includes current demand of Rs. 4860.55/- for consumption of 1302 units for the period 17.07.2019 to 26.08.2019. The previous bill placed on record is dated 13.06.2019 for Rs. 15555/-. The complainant's grievance is regarding the period post-February 2019.

5. The Department itself admits in its reply that the premises appear to be not in use for a very long time and is in a dilapidated condition and was found locked on inspection. The Department's billing statement indicates that the prior consumption (i.e., between 18.08.2018 to 24.02.2019) and subsequent consumption (i.e., between 10.10.2019 to 12.05.2020) was zero unit's, thus lending credence to the fact of the house being unoccupied for a prolonged period. That being so, there is no explanation for the sudden consumption of 7132 units between 25.02.2019 and 10.10.2019 in a dilapidated unused house. There is nothing forthcoming from the Department on this aspect. Prima facie it points to some foul play - possibly theft of electricity - during the seven month period.
6. The Departments inspection was on 13.05.2020, nine months after the disputed period. The findings of service connection wire being cut etc. cannot vindicate or throw light on the happenings between 25.02.2019 and 10.10.2019.
7. I find considerable merit in the complaint. The complainant cannot be saddled with the liability to pay the bills for the period between 25.02.2019 and 10.10.2019 in the peculiar facts and circumstances. Accordingly, all bills issued for the period from 25.02.2019 to 10.10.2019 are hereby set aside. The complaint stands disposed accordingly.


SANDRA VAZ E CORREIA
(Member)