

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

Complaint/Representation No. 19/2020/198

Shri. Custodio Damiao Fernandes,
F-1, Building B2, Kurtarkar Hills,
St. Joaquim Road, Borda,
Margao, 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 - XVI, Margao - Goa.

3. The Assistant Engineer,
Electricity Department,
Div - XVI, S/D I,
Benaullim - Goa.

..... Respondents

Present:

1. Complainant present in person

2. Shri. R G Sawant

..... for the Respondent

Dated: - 07/01/2021.

ORDER

Per Smt Sandra Vaz e Correia, Independent Member.

1. The complainant is resident of Margao having an establishment at Mazilwaddo Benaullim. He is aggrieved by the sudden

Sandra Vaz e Correia

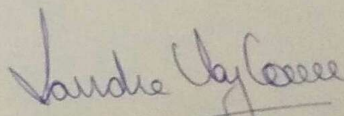
consumption spurt of about 50000 units in October 2018 based on which the Department began issuing average bills thereafter. In brief, it is the complainant's case that the electricity meter was not working for a long time. However, there was a sudden spurt of over 50000 units in October 2018, based on which the Department started issuing average bills. After repeated requests, the meter was replaced on 30.10.2019 with reading 2808.8 kwh. However, the meter reader recorded a wrong reading as 4404. Consequently, he was issued exorbitant and faulty bills. The test on the old meter showed it was okay but no reason was given for the sudden reading of 50000 units. The meter has been sent for re-testing and report is awaited. In the meanwhile, the Department disconnected the installation in December 2019. He seeks the Forum's intervention in the matter.

2. The Department contested the complaint and filed its reply through Asst Engineer SD I Division XVI Benaolim. It is their case that the meter was installed in the complainant's premises in 2012 and recorded normal usage upto 22.03.2018. Thereafter, two successive bills were billed on average basis on account of "no usage". The bill dated 22.10.2018 recorded 50163 units for 214 days (22.03.2018 to 22.10.2018). Thereafter it recorded normal units (4558) for the period 22.10.2018 to 13.03.2019. The meter was sent for testing at MRT lab on request of the consumer and a new meter was installed. The test report found the meter as "OK". As the consumer was not satisfied, the meter was sent for retesting to the manufacturer L&T who also intimated via email that the meter was OK. The possibility of erroneous reading of the new meter was not ruled out as the meter is placed at a height.

3. The parties were called for a hearing at which time the complainant appeared in person while Shri. R G Sawant represented the Department. I heard them at length.

Shri. R G Sawant

4. No doubt two test reports on the old meter have found it to be "OK". However, the question as to how the reading jumped by a whopping 50000 units in one cycle remains. A 50-fold spurt prima facie points to some malfunction in the meter that probably could not be seen in the tests by MRT lab and L&T. The consumer cannot be saddled with the liability to pay energy charges on basis of such doubtful readings. In my opinion, the bill dated 22.10.2018 cannot be sustained and is hereby set aside.
5. The Department is directed to issue fresh bill for the period 22.03.2018 to 22.10.2018 based on average consumption of previous three billing cycles, and revise all bills on average readings issued thereafter. Further, meter reading error of the new meter shall be rectified and revised bills issued. No DPC shall be charged in the revised bills. The Department shall complete this exercise and inform the complainant of the actual amount payable alongwith a detailed statement within 30 days from receipt of this order. Report compliance to the Forum within 45 days.
6. The complaint stands disposed accordingly.


SANDRA VAZ E CORREIA
(Member)