

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

**Complaint/Representation No. 27/2020/193**

Smt. Milagrina Couto,  
C/o Joslyn Couto,  
H.No. 42, Punola, Uccassaim,  
Mapusa, Bardez - 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 III,  
Mapusa - Goa.

..... **Respondents**

**Present:**

1. Complainant appeared in person

2. Shri Ashish Rajput

..... for the Respondent

**Dated: - 11/01/2021.**

**ORDER**

Per Smt Sandra Vaz e Correia, Independent Member.

The complainant is the beneficiary of an installation standing in the name of one Joslyn Couto to a residential house at Punola Uccassaim.

*Sandra Vaz e Correia*

It is her case that she has not been receiving electricity bills in the past six months. When she inquired with the meter reader, she was informed that it would happen in the following month. In February 2020, she was informed that the meter was not working, so she had it replaced. She didn't receive any bills until six months later on 16.09.2020 for an amount of Rs. 46074/-. She was shocked to receive the huge amount, and is in no position to pay. Previous bills have never crossed Rs. 2000/- in a single billing cycle of 30 - 40 days.

Per contra, Department filed its reply through Asst Engineer (Com), Mapusa. Replacement of the faulty meter on 22.02.2020 was admitted, however updation of systems was not possible due to COVID-19 lockdown and was done only on 03.05.2020. Accordingly, a bill dated 04.05.2020 was generated and dispatched. No intimation regarding non-receipt of the bill was received until the letter dated 29.09.2020. Non-receipt of bill does not excuse the consumer from payment obligation. Regarding the alleged inflated bill, the consumer was advised that it was commensurate with the sanctioned/connected load of 11.78KW/17.09KW (3 AC's + 9 fans of connected load) coupled with summer season and lockdown period when there was a general increase in domestic users' consumption. The meter was sent for testing and was found "OK".

At the hearing, the complainant appeared in person while Shri Ashish Rajput AE represented the Department. I heard the parties at length.

At the first hearing, the complainant was advised to pay 50% of the disputed bill amount under protest to avoid disconnection, which she complied on 10.11.2020 as per email from the Department received by the Registry.

The complainant's grievance is regarding the alleged inflated bill dated 16.09.2020. The impugned bill shows consumption of 10541 units between 22.02.2020 to 14.08.2020. The statement furnished by the Department shows consumption of 8760 units between 22.02.2020 to

*Shri Ashish Rajput*

01.05.2020 (68 days) followed by consumption of 2900 units between 01.05.2020 and 28.10.2020 (181 days). Prima facie, the mismatch and surge in consumption is palpable. Assuming the Department's version of consumption being commensurate with the sanctioned/connected load and summer season and lockdown period when there was a general increase in domestic users' consumption is true, the subsequent period of 181 days ought to have registered a largely identical or slightly less consumption, certainly not a steep 8-fold decrease. No doubt the meter was tested in October 2020 and found "OK", but some malfunction or "jumping" in the meter that occurred six months earlier probably could not be seen in the MRT lab test. The consumer cannot be saddled with the liability to pay energy charges on basis of such doubtful readings.

In my opinion, the bill dated 16.09.2020 cannot be sustained and is hereby set aside. The said bill, insofar as it pertains to the period from 22.02.2020 to 01.05.2020, shall be revised by considering the average consumption in the subsequent three billing cycles i.e., between 01.05.2020 to 01.08.2020. A revised bill shall be issued to the consumer - complainant within 30 days from receipt of the order. The amount of Rs. 24356/- paid by the complainant shall be credited/adjusted against the next bill. Department shall report compliance of this order within 40 days from today. The complainant stands disposed accordingly.



**SANDRA VAZ B CORREIA**  
(Member)