

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

Complaint/Representation No. 08/2020/73

Shri. Allwyn Fernandes,
House No. 415/V-1,
Villa No.1, Vaigini, Nachinola,
Bardez, Goa - 403508.

..... Complainant

V/S

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

..... Respondents

Present:

1. Complainant present in person
2. Shri. Devendra Karapurkar

..... for the Respondent

Dated: - 30/06/2020.

ORDER

Per Smt Sandra Vaz e Correia, Nominated Member.

1. The complainant is a resident of Aldona, Bardez Goa. In a nutshell, his grievance is that he took possession of his Villa # 1 in June 2019

Sandra Vaz e Correia

with the energy meter reading 24.9 Kwh. Inspite of monthly energy consumption of 20 - 30 units, the bills issued showed nil consumption. In addition, there were random adjustments and frequent changes in the billing cycles. The meter reader was not visiting the premises. Consequently, he was charged minimum charges as per sanctioned load. An amount of Rs. 1065/- was claimed against bill dated 17.01.2020 for nil consumption and Rs. 1000/- against bill dated 18.02.2020 for 27 units. He prayed for revision of the bills showing the actual consumption.

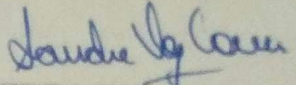
2. I heard the parties over video conference call; the complainant was present in person while Licensee Department was represented by Shri Devendra Karapurkar AE (Com). Both sides conveyed their no-objection to a single member disposing the complaint. After hearing them at length, the Departmental representative was requested to submit para-wise comments on the complainant via email with copy to the complainant. Liberty was given to file written submissions thereafter.
3. Accordingly, comments were received. The Department's case in brief is that the meter reader was unable to access the meter as the gate was closed, and hence recorded the nil consumption. Under a gazette notification dated 05.09.2019, Department was entitled to bill minimum charges of Rs. 1000/- for those premises that were closed or locked for continuous period of three months and having sanctioned load of more than 10KW. The complainant was given an option of furnishing a photograph of the energy meter showing the reading and the serial number. But he stated his inability to do so on the ground that no reading had been noted by him. Accordingly, from the third billing cycle onwards, the minimum charges of Rs 1000/- were applied. However, after receipt of the complaint, a credit of Rs. 832/- had been given to the complainant that "resolved most of the issues". Now, the complainant was noting the reading and informing the Department and thus avoiding minimum billing.

Sanjay G. Sonu

4. The complainant sent an email with his written submissions. He is not satisfied with the credit of Rs. 832/- that, according to him, was with respect to the bill dated 18.02.2020 for Rs. 1000/- which he had paid. The bill dated 17.01.2020 for Rs.1065/- has not been adjusted/revised. He stated that he was not supposed to click and send pictures of the meter readings when this was the job of the Department's meter reader.
5. I have perused the file and emails sent by the parties and given due consideration to their submissions. The credit of Rs. 832/- is given against the bill dated bill dated 18.02.2020 for Rs. 1000/- that was paid by the complainant. The erroneous application of minimum charge in the second disputed bill dated 17.01.2020 for Rs.1065/- remains unresolved. This bill would also require to be adjusted/revised as was done in the case of the other one.
6. Next, there appears to be an issue with meter reading. The complainant claims that the meter reader never visited his premises. On the other hand, Department claims that their meter reader cannot access the meter as the gate is closed. Incidentally, the complainant admits that readings of his neighbours meter (in the gated complex) are being collected by the meter reader, which points to the fact that the meter reader visits the complex but has some issue with the complainant's premises. The conditions of supply require unhindered access to be given to the meter readers by the consumer. The complainant will have to cooperate and coordinate with the Department to ensure smooth collection of meter readings henceforth.
7. In view of the foregoing, I pass the following order:
 1. The Department is directed to revise the bill dated 17.01.2020 for Rs.1065/- as per actual consumption (and not minimum charges) and reverse the excess billed amount if any;

Sandeep Singh

2. Department shall report compliance of this order to the Forum within 30 days of its' receipt; and
3. The complainant shall cooperate and coordinate with the Department to ensure smooth and unhindered recording of meter readings by the meter reader henceforth.
8. The complaint stands disposed in accordance with the aforesaid directions.


SANDRA VAZ E CORREIA
(Member)