

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

Complaint/Representation No. 35/2020/216

Shri. Minguel Vaz,
H.No.776, Zamboll,
Cortalim, Goa - 403 710.

..... Complainant

V/S

1. The Chief Electrical Engineer,
Electricity Department,
Government of Goa,
Vidyut Bhavan, Panaji, Goa.

2. The Executive Engineer,
Electricity Department,
Div - XI, Vasco - Goa.

3. The Assistant Engineer,
Electricity Department,
Div - XI, **S/D II**,
Vasco - Goa.

..... Respondents

Present:

1. Complainant appeared in person

2. Shri. John Lucas

..... for the Respondent

Dated: - 14/01/2021.

ORDER

Per Smt Sandra Vaz e Correia, Independent Member.

1. This order shall dispose the complaint dated 27.11.2020 filed by the complainant. He is a resident of Cortalim and is aggrieved by

Sandra Vaz Correia

the alleged erroneous recording of consumption resulting in inflated bills.

2. In a nutshell, it is the complainant's case that the meter readers "disappeared" for four months. Thereafter, between 02.06.2020 and 17.08.2020, an identical meter reading of 1414 was recorded. On 17.09.2020, the reading was 2023 with consumption of 609. On that day, the complainant was present and when he asked the meter reader for the reading, he was informed that it was 2623 and previous units 2023. As a result, he would have to pay an excess amount of Rs. 600/-. The meter reader did not take the reading on 17.11.2020. The meter readers complaint was that there was a water tank placed in front of the meter that was obstructing proper reading. He requested for reduction of the bill by at least Rs. 600/-.
3. On the other hand, Department filed its reply through AE (Tech), SD II, Vasco. In short, it is their case that the bill dated 06.07.2020 was for the period 17.03.2020 to 06.07.2020 due to COVID-19 pandemic. In the next bill dated 17.08.2020, the meter reader faced difficulty in noting the reading due to a water tank being placed in front of the meter. In the bill dated 17.09.2020, the reading could not be recorded as there was no power supply. In the bill dated 19.10.2020, the reading was taken after climbing over the water tank. This bill included the period between 02.06.2020 to 17.08.2020 that was already covered under the previous two bills. Consumption of the bill dated 17.11.2020 was taken by climbing over the tank. In addition to the water tank placed in front of the meter, the meter readers were also facing the problem of stray dogs in the area. Photograph showing the water tank placed in front of the meter and internal correspondence regarding problems faced by the meter reader was also produced. Later, as directed by me, Department filed a statement of revision of bill on 28.12.2020

Sandeep G. Carre

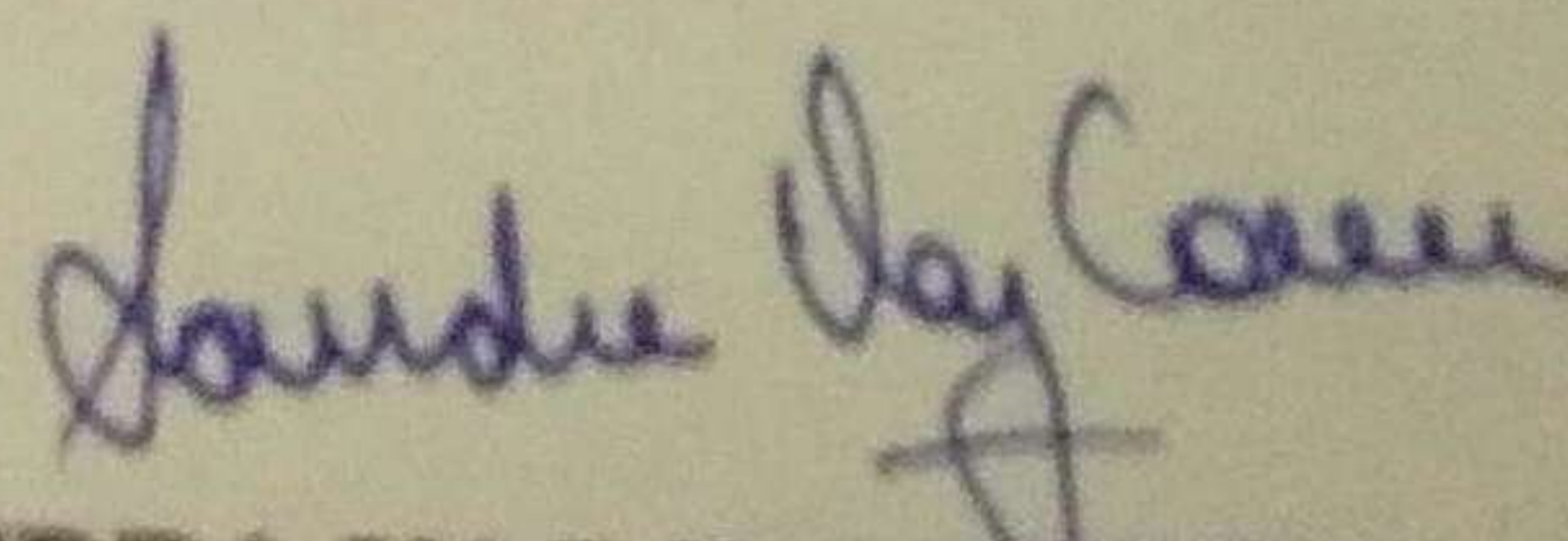
without DPC thereby reducing the net amount by Rs. 73/- from Rs. 2513/- to Rs. 2440/-.

4. The parties were called for a hearing at which time the complainant appeared in person while Shri John Lucas AE represented the Department. I heard them at length. While reiterating his case set out in the complaint, the complainant submitted that there was no obstruction in meter reading as the tank was existing at the location for several years. He also pointed out to the spike in consumption (395 units) in the bill dated 17.11.2020 that was due to improper meter reading.
5. I perused the file and gave due consideration to the submissions of the parties. The Department has explained the difficulties allegedly being faced by the meter reader; a claim refuted by the complainant. As regards the complainant's claim regarding spike in consumption in the bill dated 17.11.2020, it is to be noted that in the following month, the consumption recorded was 125 units. The average consumption in these two bills for the period 17.09.2020 to 17.11.2020 is 260 units, which is similar to average consumption of 270 units recorded in the previous three bills for the period 02.06.2020 to 17.09.2020. Hence, even assuming there was an erroneous recording in the bill dated 17.11.2020, the error was adjusted in the next bill. The billing statement attached to the Department's reply as well as revised statement attached to letter dated 24.12.2020 was furnished to the complainant. He did not point out any specific anomalies in the calculations. I have perused the said statements, and found them to be in order and reflecting the consumption by the consumer.
6. Turning to the issue of difficulty in meter reading, in view of the rival contentions, I feel that the Executive Engineer Div. XI Vasco ought to visit the site and resolve the matter to the satisfaction of all parties.

Sandeep Jay Gove

7. In view of the foregoing, I pass the following order:

1. The complaint is partly allowed.
2. The bills issued for the period from 02.06.2020 to 15.12.2020 shall be revised as per statement attached to Department's letter dated 24.12.2020 i.e., without charging DPC.
3. Such revised bill shall be issued within 30 days from receipt of this order.
4. The Executive Engineer Div. XI Vasco is requested to visit the site with prior intimation to the complainant, and resolve the matter of alleged inconvenience in meter reading to the satisfaction of both parties within the next 30 days. In this endeavor, the complainant is requested to cooperate with the Department, keeping in mind his obligations under Revised Conditions for Supply of Electrical Energy 2012 etc. that require him to ensure that the meter is always accessible to the Department for meter reading and other purposes.
5. Compliance of the order shall be reported to the Forum within 40 days.
6. The complaint stands disposed accordingly.



SANDRA VAZ E CORREIA
(Member)