

Ratan Mundra, Kaliyaganj, Uttar Dinajpur, West Bengal, India

Ratan Mundra of Kaliyaganj, Uttar Dinajpur district, West Bengal had a very long standing issue with his bill. An amount of Rs. 3300 was constantly showing as outstanding in his bill even though he had cleared all his due. The issue was that the meter reader had wrongly recorded his reading when he shifted house and re-installed his electricity connection & meter. He had approached all possible officials and forums known to him, including the Consumer Court. The Consumer Court had issued an order in his favour and yet his problem did not get resolved. He saw three Station Managers (head of the utility's local office) come and go without any headway with his problem. All of them had promised him assistance and apparently tried to, but without avail. Since the mistake was done a whopping 19 years back and the local offices could not trace his records at their end, the Station Managers kept postponing the issue by allowing him to pay the current bills and asking him to hold on with the outstanding amount. Mundra, however, has been a very aware consumer and had preserved all his receipts, prayers, orders, et al. when the CONASC team of Uttar Dinajpur came across his case, they requested him to attend one of the capacity building exercises where officials from the utility were present. Mundra recounted his grievance to the present station manager and thereafter attended one of the Regional Office Meetings with higher officials, CUTS & CONASC in hope of redressal. It was during this meeting that he, assisted by CUTS, presented all his papers, orders, bills, etc. His case was discussed to the minutest details and finally the Divisional Manager, Regional Manager & Regional Grievance Redressal Officer (RGRO) agreed that he need not pay the outstanding amount of Rs. 3300 since the amount cropped up due to an error by the meter reader. To end his woe of 19 long years, CUTS requested the officials that his bill be regenerated on the spot and his case resolved with immediate effect. The officials obliged and a new bill was generated to show that he no longer had any outstanding amount to his name. The cooperation received from WBSEDCL officials A.Pal, Divisional Manager, S.K. Deb, Regional Manager and Dawa Tamang, Kaliyaganj Station Manager, needs a definite mention here. Mundra, who had lost all hope of redressal and faith on the utility's redressal system, was floored and almost couldn't believe that his 19 year long tirade had finally ended! He thanked CUTS and the officials for restoring his faith on fair play and justice.