

Revamped Distribution Sector Scheme: Reforms-Based and Result-Linked

The government of India has approved the Revamped Distribution Sector Scheme (RDSS) to help DISCOMs improve their operational efficiencies and financial sustainability by providing result-linked financial assistance to DISCOMs to strengthen supply infrastructure based on meeting pre-qualifying criteria and achieving basic minimum benchmarks. The scheme has an outlay of Rs 3,03,758 Crore over 5 years i.e., FY 2021-22 to FY 2025-26. The outlay includes an estimated Government Budgetary Support (GBS) of Rs 97,631 Crore.

The scheme aims to meet the following objectives:

- Reduction of AT&C losses to pan-India levels of 12-15% by 2024-25.
- Reduction of ACS-ARR gap to zero by 2024-25.
- Improvement in the quality, reliability and affordability of power supply to consumers through a financially sustainable and operationally efficient distribution sector.

Some of the salient features of Revamped Distribution Sector Scheme are as below:

- Prepaid Smart Metering to be prioritized for 500 AMRUT cities, with AT&C Losses > 15%.
- All Union Territories
- MSMEs, Industrial and Commercial consumers
- All Government offices at the Block level and above
- Other areas with high losses

As per ministry of Power, Govt of India's Gazette notification F.No. 23/35/2019-R&R. dated 17th August 2021.

All consumers (other than agricultural consumers) in areas with communication network, shall be supplied electricity with Smart Meters working in prepayment mode.

As a result, MGVL will initiate the smart meter roll out program in its jurisdiction with permission from the Gujarat government.

Under this proposed plan, the existing meters will be replaced with smart prepaid meters.

The total 33.56 Lacs smart meters are to be installed in the jurisdiction of MGVL.

Under this scheme, MGVL is planning to start the installation of 25000 smart prepayment meters on pilot basis in Akota and Alkapuri subdivision from the month of December 2023.

This undergoing programme will benefit the consumers in following ways:

- Enhanced accuracy in billing as there will be no manual intervention.
- Consumer can track electricity consumption using a mobile application.
- Consumer can recharge their electricity account in advance and as per their convenience.
- Wireless monitor/PC shows real time information on energy use.
- Can help people understand their energy use take steps to reduce it.
- Emergency credit by the utility during holidays and non-working hours (To be defined by utility)

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) for Prepaid Smart Meters

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1	What are smart meters?	Smart meters are a new generation of energy meters that allow you to learn about your consumption pattern and help utilities conduct system monitoring and customer billing without manual intervention
2	What is the prepaid function in a smart meter?	The prepaid function in a smart meter operates similarly to a prepaid mobile. You need to recharge your meter in advance to use electricity. In the case of low or no balance, you will receive 2 or 3 alerts through your meter and/or SMS before supply is disconnected. The prepaid function helps in avoiding unexpected bills and also allows you to budget your usage
3	Are smart prepaid meters compulsory?	Regulations mandate the installation of prepaid smart meters in a phased manner.
4	Will consumer have to pay for installing a smart meter?	Consumer are not required to pay upfront for the smart meter installation.
5	What is the benefit of using smart meters?	<p>a) Consumer can track electricity consumption using a mobile application.</p> <p>b) Consumer can recharge their electricity account in advance.</p> <p>c) Smart meters can digitally send consumers electricity reading to the utility.</p> <p>d) It helps the utilities improve power supply.</p>
6	Do consumer need to install a 'smart' sub-meter for separate floors or tenants?	The mandate is to install smart meters at the interface points with DISCOM. Further, consumer may install smart sub-meter for separate floors/tenants at their option.
7	If consumer have a solar rooftop system; can he/she get a smart meter?	Yes, smart meters can be installed with a solar roof top. However, the policy for installation may vary from state to state. Thus, consumer may contact their local utility office for more information.
8	Will consumers electricity bill increase after installation of a smart prepaid meter?	There will be no increase in consumers electricity bill as compared to a traditional meter. Smart meters will increase the accuracy of meter reading by eliminating human errors associated with manual meter reading and will also allow him/her to monitor consumption pattern.
9	How can consumer recharge smart meters (including minimum recharge amount)?	<p>Consumer can recharge their smart meters through any of the following:</p> <p>a) Utility collection counters.</p> <p>b) Nearest customer service centre.</p> <p>c) Digitally through the utility's mobile application, website, or payment wallet linked application.</p>
10	Will consumer receive any alerts from utility for low balance or disconnection?	Yes, consumer will receive alerts from the utility on their registered mobile number, smart meter, and the utility's mobile application.

11	How long will it take for the recharge to reflect on consumer's meter?	Typically, the recharge should reflect on consumers meter within few minutes. In case of a delay, they will have to contact the utility office.
12	What is the minimum balance amount consumer need to maintain in their account to prevent disconnection?	Although there is no mandate for a minimum balance, it is still advisable for consumers to keep a minimum balance to continue to enjoy uninterrupted power supply.
13	How can consumer check the balance on prepaid smart meter?	Consumer can check the balance amount by doing any of the following: a) Checking the display on energy meters. b) Using mobile application. c) Logging-in to the utility's website with his/her customer ID. d) Calling the utility's toll-free number.
14	Will consumers power supply be cut off immediately if my recharge gets exhausted?	In the event of a low balance, you will receive alerts from the utility on your registered mobile number, smart meter, and the utility's mobile application before the supply cuts-off.
15	How can consumer distinguish between a power outage and a disconnection?	In the case of a disconnection, the meter will still have supply and show a message of low or no balance.
16	Can consumer check the accuracy of their smart meters?	If consumer suspect the smart meter to be tampered with or is giving an incorrect reading, consumer can contact utility (in-person, toll-free number, or any other mode provided by the utility) with his/her complaint. the utility will get the meter checked at payable charges.
17	What can consumer do if he/she is unable to recharge through the mobile application or if there is a transaction failure?	consumer can complain about the recharge failure at the grievance redressal numbers of the utility or register a complaint through the utility's mobile application. The concerned authority will guide them through the process.
18	Who should consumer approach if the power supply does not resume even after recharge?	Typically, power restoration takes place within a few minutes of recharge. If the connection is not restored, consumer may contact the utility via a grievance redressal number to get the problem rectified.
19	What should consumer do if his/her supply gets disconnected even though the balance in the prepaid meter is available?	This normally would not happen, however in rarest such possibility, they have to contact utility helpline number, available on the website and mobile application.
20	How can consumer track their complaint status?	By using present complaint redressal mechanism or smart meter application, it will be defined by utility.
21	How can consumer change his/her registered mobile number?	The change of mobile number may be done through the established KYC process of your utility.
22	Can consumer request access to the data collected through the smart meter?	Yes, they can access their smart meter data via your utility's mobile application or website.
23	How can smart meters help to reduce consumers energy bills?	Consumer can check and track energy consumption on a real-time basis with the help of the utility's mobile application or website. This information can track the electricity usage data and the tariff paid for the same.

24	How can consumer monitor his/her electricity usage? Can they switch ON/OFF their meter remotely?	They can use the utility's mobile application or website to track their electricity consumption. However, due to security concerns, the interface is not meant for switching meters ON/OFF.
25	How prepaid meters operate?	These meters are operates based on the amount available at meters. If there is no balance amount in meter then it will disconnect your supply and supply will not be disconnected when there is balance available in the meters.
26	What is the tariff structure adopted in prepaid meter?	Tariff as per the Tariff order given by GERC. Tariff can be accessed through utilities website