

## **Gist of Discussion at the second meeting of the Distribution Utilities Forum**

1. **In the Chair:** Mr. Gireesh B Pradhan, Honorary Chairman, DUF.
2. The **second meeting of the Distribution Utilities Forum** was held on **31 October, 2018** at Hotel Claridges, New Delhi under the chairmanship of Mr. Gireesh B. Pradhan. The theme of the meeting was Rural Electrification: Impact on Discoms (with special reference to the Saubhgya scheme implementation). List of participants and agenda are enclosed.
3. In his welcome address **Dr. Ajay Mathur, Director-General TERI**, said that the Forum is a place where the participating Discoms may share their challenges and best practices in implementing rural electrification programs for the benefit of all and the discussion paper prepared by TERI on the same can be taken forward and circulated across all utilities in India.
4. The **TERI team** presented a background paper titled **“Impact of rural electrification on the distribution companies of India”** which outlined pre and post implementation challenges faced by Discoms in completing rural electrification programs. This was followed by presentations from representatives of **Jaipur Vidyut Vitran Nigam Ltd. (JVVNL) and Odisha Power Transmission Corp. Ltd. (OPTCL)** sharing their experience on implementing the Saubhgya scheme in their respective service areas. Representatives from **Maharashtra State Electricity Distribution Co. Ltd. (MSEDCL) and West Bengal State Electricity Distribution Co. Ltd. (WBSEDCL)** also shared their experiences and the best practices adopted for rural electrification in the post lunch session.
5. **Key points** on the theme of rural electrification that came out of the discussion at Forum meeting are as below:

### *Additional funds requirement by the Discoms:*

During the consultations with Discoms, many of them mentioned that the funds sanctioned for last mile connectivity are inadequate and therefore, the Discoms had requested REC for additional funds for electrification of habitats not covered under the Saubhgya scheme. It was noted that additional funds have been provided for the same.

### *Innovative distribution/Service models*

- i. Representatives from MSEDCL, JVVNL and OPTCL mentioned the service models followed in the respective jurisdiction as under:
  - a) **Maharashtra:** A Gram Sevak is appointed by the Gram Panchayat for each village to carry out tasks including meter reading, breakdown management, electricity restoration, street lights maintenance, new electric connections, and stalling electricity connection if arrears are not paid (<https://www.sayingtruth.com/electric-manager-for-every-village-soon/>). The emoluments to the Gram Sevak are paid by MSEDCL.
  - b) **Rajasthan:** One person is appointed as a feeder in-charge and is responsible for maintaining the feeder and carrying out tasks such as meter reading, billing, collection, etc. The feeder in-charge is equipped with the mobile app and has the facility of the mobile vans (GPS tracked). The Discom has also created an anti-theft vigilance squad that uses this mobile van facility and report thefts or illegal hooking on the respective feeders.

- c) **Odisha:** Engaging women's self-help groups for metering, spot billing and collection of electricity bills led to an increase in the collection efficiency to about 90%. <https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/news/after-success-in-odisha-fedco-scouts-for-more-discoms-for-management/article9799190.ece>

*Suggestion for improved service:*

**Manipur** Discom mentioned that they have suggested to the turnkey contractors to hire staff with a diverse religious mix, so that during festivals work does not suffer due to bulk of staff going on leave.

*Best practices by JVVNL*

**Mobile application:** JVVNL demonstrated the mobile application to track the metering, consumption, billing and collection online. The app could also track where the lineman is servicing on real time basis. The list of consumers defaulting on bill payment is also generated by the app. The consumer centric application also provides provision for registering for a new electricity connection and making changes in registered mobile numbers, address, etc.

**DT replacement:** JVVNL utilizes outsourced manpower for maintenance activities for tasks such as DT replacement. They have also contracted to make arrangements for renting trolley (capable of carrying 1-2 tonne load) when needed. The trollies can carry the new DT for replacement in case of complaint from the village for DT burnout. They have made provision of walk-in facility in the call centres (at the division/sub-division level) where the complaint gets registered for DT replacement and within 3-4 hours from the registration of complaint the DT gets replaced by the use of mobile cranes/trollies.

*Other challenges to be included in the draft paper*

The participants made following suggestions for inclusion in the paper:

- **Poor services during rainy season:** With respect to delivering services during the rainy days in some of the states, breakdowns cannot be rectified due to heavy rainfall; therefore, reaching the villages and households may be a problem post implementation of Saubhagya. Services that may be stalled include meter reading, maintenance of meters, correct billing and resolving billing complaints.
- **Quality of supply:** Quality of power supply may become an important issue that needs to be addressed post implementation of Saubhagya as currently the focus is on providing connections. Participants felt that providing reliable and quality supply may pose different set of questions.
- **Cross-subsidy:** Increasing house-hold electricity would result in increased domestic consumption in the overall consumption mix in a Discom. This may increase cross-subsidation by high paying consumers industrial and commercial category
- **Limited provision for vehicles for network maintenance:** As the Discoms are unable to provide vehicles for transportation of material or equipment for repair and maintenance

(R&M) activities, delays generally occur in the maintenance of the network disrupting reliable power to the consumers. Discoms suggested investing in vehicles so as to provide reliable supply to consumers.

- **Poor services and breakdown of equipment:** The terms of EPC contractors should be for longer durations, say 10 years, and it should include construction as well as O&M to ensure installation of good quality of equipment and avoid untimely replacements. This also assumes importance from the workers' safety considerations viewpoint.
- **Differential tariff amongst the BPL and SECC households:** Under the Saubhagya scheme, free connections are provided to the households falling in SECC and BPL categories. The electricity tariff differential between consumers SECC and BPL categories being significant, this may become an issue post implementing rural household electrification. SECC may feel that they are paying higher than BPL households; though, the connection was free to both categories of consumers under the scheme.

Participants felt that articulating and communicating the perspective of Discoms on this and further such issues to all stakeholders to be seen as top-most priority of the forum.

6. Solar rooftop was decided as the theme for the second meeting of Distribution Utilities Forum by the participants in the first meeting held on 4 May, 2018. Accordingly, a presentation on the approach to study the "Implication of Rooftop Solar on the performance of Discoms" was made by the TERI team, annexed here for reference.
7. In addition, following key areas for study were also suggested by the forum members:
  - a) Electric Vehicle Charging
  - b) Best practices in consumer service
  - c) Commercial loss reduction: Sharing of best practices
  - d) Technical loss reduction: Sharing of best practices
  - e) Separation of carriage and content – Distribution Utilities' perspective
  - f) Smart metering
8. The forum members were requested to provide inputs/comments within two weeks of receipt of draft proceedings. The Chairman of the Forum will sign off the proceedings and the finalized background paper titled, "Impact of Rural Electrification in Discoms of India", for further circulation.

The meeting concluded with a vote of thanks from Mr. Krishan Dhawan, CEO Shakti Sustainable Energy Foundation.

**Annexure I:**

List of Participants from Discoms:

S.No	Name	Designation	Organisation
1	Mr. Gireesh B. Pradhan	Hony. Chairman	Distribution Utilities Forum
2	Mr. Mithun Chakraborty	Head of Group - Strategy	Tata Power Delhi Distribution Limited
3	Dr. G Ganesh Das	Head - Strategy, Business Excellence & Collaboration	Tata Power Delhi Distribution Limited
4	Mr. Navin Arora	Director (Technical)	Jaipur Vidyut Vitran Nigam Ltd
5	Mr. K Kunjali	Chief Mechanical Engineer	Cochin Port Trust
6	Mr. Vineet Sikka	Sr. Vice President & Head Business	BSES Rajdhani Power Limited
7	Mr. Abhishek Ranjan	AVP (System Operation) & Head - Renewables & DSM	BSES Rajdhani Power Limited
8	Mr. Brijesh Kumar Jha	ASVP (Business Excellence Team)	BSES Rajdhani Power Limited
9	Mr. Sunil Sharma	Sr. Manager	BSES Yamuna Power Limited
10	Mr. Naveen Nagpal	General Manager (Renewables)	BSES Rajdhani Power Limited
11	Mr. Amit Prakash	AVP - Commercial	India Power Corporation Limited
12	Mr. Santanu Sen	DGM (Testing)	CESC Limited
13	Mr. Bibhu Prasad Mahapatra	Director (Finance)	Odisha Power Transmission Power Corporation Ltd
14	Mr. Niladri Khadanga	Manager (DMU)	Odisha Power Transmission Power Corporation Ltd
15	Mr. Ajay Kumar Dasmahapatra	CE (Rural Electrification),	West Bengal State Elec Distribution Co. Ltd
16	Mr. Tapas Das	Addl. CE (Saubhagya)	West Bengal State Elec Distribution Co. Ltd
17	Mr. S H Patel	DE (Solar),	Uttar Gujarat Vij Company Ltd
18	Mr. G V Patel	JE (RE)	Uttar Gujarat Vij Company Ltd
19	Mr. Prasad Reshme	Executive Director (infra)	Maharashtra State Electricity Dist. Co. Ltd
20	Mr. Khuraijam Singhajit Singh	Manager, PMU-RE	Manipur State Power Dist. Co. Ltd

List of Participants from TERI and Shakti Sustainable Energy Foundation:

S.No	Name	Designation	Organisation
1.	Mr. Krishan Dhawan	CEO	Shakti Foundation
2.	Mr. Chinmaya K Acharya	Chief of Programs	Shakti Foundation
3.	Ms. Gayatri Ramanathan	Program Coordinator	Shakti Foundation
4.	Ms. Vrinda Sarada	Program Associate	Shakti Foundation
5.	Dr. Ajay Mathur	Director General	TERI
6.	Mr. K Ramanathan	Distinguished Fellow	TERI
7.	Mr. Amit Kumar	Senior Fellow and Senior Director	TERI
8.	Dr. Ashvini Kumar	Senior Director	TERI
9.	Mr. A K Saxena	Director, Electricity and Fuels Division	TERI
10.	Mr. Debajit Palit	Senior Fellow & Director	TERI
11.	Alekhya Datta	Fellow	TERI
12.	Mr. Abhinav Jain	Associate Fellow	TERI
13.	Ms. Astha Gupta	Associate Fellow	TERI
14.	Ms. Rashi Singh	Research Associate	TERI

# Annex II



## Rooftop Solar Theme for next DUF meeting

Findings from consultations with Discoms

### Objectives

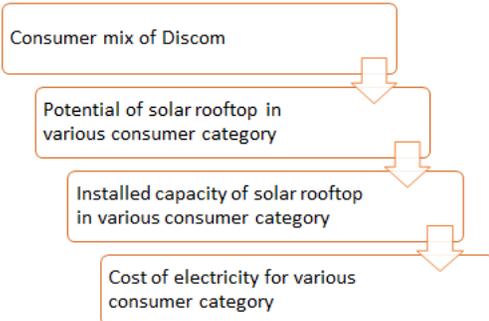
#### Broad objective

To present a '**distribution utility**' perspective on the advantages and impact on DISCOMs for implementation of Rooftop Solar

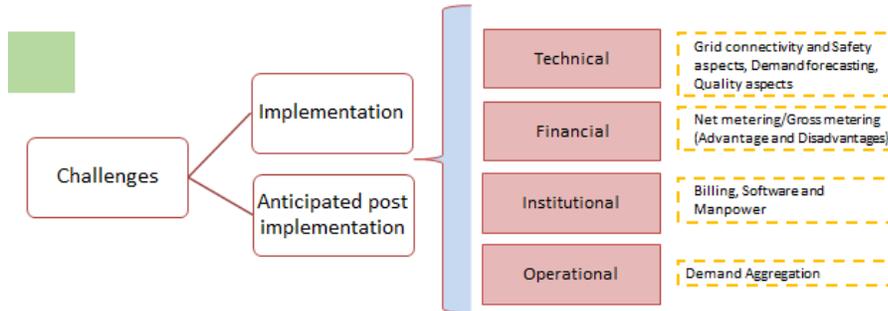
#### Specific objectives

- To identify the key challenges faced by Discoms in **implementing the Rooftop solar program** as well as the forthcoming after-effects of these programs on their performance
- To **highlight leading operational and institutional best practices** that have enabled Discoms to promote installation of rooftop solar

### Selection Criteria of Discoms



## Framework

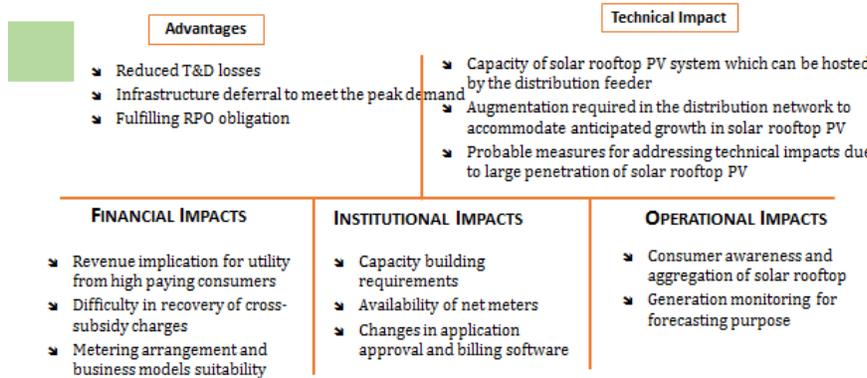


Type and degree of challenges may vary from State to State

## Framework



### TECHNICAL IMPACTS AND ADVANTAGES



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