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FAQs on Pradhan Mantri Sahaj Bijli Har Ghar Yojana "Saubhagya"

Pradhan Mantri Sahaj Bijli Har Ghar Yojana –“Saubhagya” a new scheme was launched by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi to ensure electrification of all willing households in the country in rural as well as urban areas on 25th September, 2017.

The following Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) give a detailed view of objectives, features, expected outcomes and implementation strategy of the Scheme.

Qs. No. 1 What is the objective of this new scheme?

Ans. The objective of the 'Saubhagya' is to provide energy access to all by last mile connectivity and electricity connections to all remaining un-electrified households in rural as well as urban areas to achieve universal household electrification in the country.

Qs. No. 2 What all is included in the last mile connectivity and electricity connection to households?

Ans. The electricity connection to households include release of electricity connections by drawing a service cable from the nearest electricity pole to the household premise, installation of energy meter, wiring for a single light point with LED bulb and a mobile charging point. In case the electricity pole is not available nearby from household for drawing service cable, the erection of additional pole along with conductor and associated accessories shall also be covered under the scheme.

Qs. No. 3 Will electricity connection would be totally free of cost for every un-electrified households?

Ans. Yes. Poor households would be provided electricity connections free of cost. Other households would also be provided electricity connections under the scheme on payment of Rs.500 only which shall be recovered by the DISCOMs/Power Departments in ten (10) instalments along with electricity bills.

Qs. No.4 Does the free electricity connection also includes free power for consumption?

Ans. There is no provision in the scheme to provide free power to any category of consumers. The cost of electricity consumption shall have to be paid by the respective consumers as per prevailing tariff of the DISCOM/Power Deptt.

Qs. No. 5 The earlier programme of Government of India '24x7 Power For All' has similar objective.? How is it different from this programme ?

Ans. '24x7 Power for All' is a joint initiative with the states covering all segments of power sector i.e. Power generation, transmission and distribution, energy efficiency, health of Discom etc. to finalise State/UT specific roadmap and action plan to ensure 24x7 power for all in consultation with States/UTs. The Power for All documents contain details of various interventions required across the value chain of power sector.

Providing connectivity to all households is a prerequisite to ensure 24x7 power supply. Saubhagya is a schematic support to address the issue of energy access.

Qs. No. 6 In distribution sector, two major schemes; DDUGJY for rural areas and IPDS in urban areas are already under implementation- then what is the need for a new scheme?

Ans. Deendayal Upadhyaya Gram Jyoti Yojana (DDUGJY) envisage creation of basic electricity infrastructure in villages / habitations, strengthening & augmentation of existing infrastructure, metering of existing feeders / distribution transformers / consumers to improve quality and reliability of power supply in rural areas. Besides this, last mile connectivity and free electricity connections are also provided to BPL households only identified by the States as per their list. However, in villages which are electrified in past for a long period, many households do not have electricity connections for many reasons. Some of the really poor households do not have BPL cards but these households are not capable of paying applicable initial connection charges. There is also lack of awareness as to how to get connection or taking connection is not an easy task for illiterate people. There may not be electricity pole nearby and the cost of erection of additional pole, conductor is also chargeable from the households for obtaining a connection.

Similarly in urban areas, Integrated Power Development Scheme (IPDS) provides for creation of necessary infrastructure to provide electricity access but some households are not yet connected mainly on account of their economic condition as they are not capable of paying the initial connection charges.

Therefore, Soubhagya has been launched to plug such gaps and comprehensively address the issues of entry barrier, last mile connectivity and release of electricity connections to all un-electrified households in rural and urban areas.

Qs. No. 7 Is the cost of Saubhagya scheme over & above the outlay available under DDUGJY?

Ans. Yes, the cost of Saubhagya scheme i.e. Rs. 16,320 crore is over and above the investment being made under DDUGJY.

Qs. No. 8 What is the criteria for allocation of funds to the States?

Ans. Projects under the scheme would be sanctioned based on the Detailed Project Reports (DPRs) to be submitted by the States. There is no upfront allocation of fund under the scheme.

Qs. No. 9 How the scheme would be implemented in the entire country?

Ans. Project proposals shall be prepared by the State DISCOMs / Power Deptt. and sanctioned by an inter-ministerial Monitoring Committee headed by Secretary (Power), GOI. The electrification works under the sanctioned projects shall be executed by respective DISCOMs/Power Deptt. through turnkey contractors or departmentally or through other suitable agencies capable of doing this work as per norms.

Qs. No.10 What is strategy for achievement of target in a time bound manner?

Ans. In order to hasten the process of release of connections to households, camps would be organised in villages / cluster of villages for identification of beneficiaries using modern IT technology with a Mobile App / Web Portal. Application for electricity connections shall also be registered electronically and requisite documentation including photograph of applicant, copy of identity card and / or details such as mobile number/Aadhar number/bank account number etc. shall be completed on spot in the camps, so that connections are released at the earliest.

The Gram Panchayat / public institutions in rural areas shall also be authorized to collect application form, complete documentation and also for distribution of bills, collection of revenue and other activities, as applicable.

Qs. No.11 What would be estimated rise in power demand with the inclusion of 4 crore households in the electricity network?

Ans. Considering an average load of 1 KW per household and average uses of load for 8 hours in a day, there will be requirement of additional power of about 28,000 MW and additional energy of about 80,000 million units per annum. This is a dynamic figure. With the enhancement of income and habit of using electricity, the demand of electricity is bound to vary. This figure will also vary if the assumptions are changed.

Qs. No.12 What is the provision for households where it is not feasible to extend grid lines?

Ans. For households located in remote and inaccessible areas, solar power packs of 200 to 300 Watt and battery back with 5 LED light, 1 DC Fan, 1 DC power plug along with repair and maintenance for 5 years would be provided.

Qs. No.13 How many un-electrified households would be covered under Saubhagya.

Ans. There are about 4 crore un-electrified households estimated in the country of which about 1 crore BPL households in rural areas are already covered under sanctioned projects of DDUGJY. Thus, total of 300 lakh households, 250 lakh households in rural areas and 50 lakh in urban areas, are expected to be covered under the scheme.

Qs. No.14 Would the Scheme envisage providing amnesty to illegal consumers to come and register? Is that also something the Scheme targets?

Ans. The illegal connections need to be dealt with by the respective DISCOMs/Power Deptt in accordance with their rules/regulations in this regard. However, the scheme categorically provides that the defaulters whose connections have been disconnected shall not be given benefit of the scheme.

Qs. No.15 In what manner, the Scheme would be useful for people in their daily life?

Ans. Access to electricity definitely has positive impact on quality of life of people in all aspects of daily household chores and human development. Firstly , Access to electricity would substitute use of Kerosene for lighting purposes resulting in reduction in indoor pollution thereby saving people from health hazards. Further, electricity access would help in establishing efficient and modern health services in all parts of the country. Lighting after the sunset also provide a sense of enhanced personal safety especially for women and increase in post sunset social as well as economic activities. Availability of electricity will boost education services across all areas and quality lighting post sunset would facilitate children to spend more time on studies and move ahead further in prospective careers. Household electrification also increases the likelihood that women would study and earn income.

Qs. No.16 In what manner, the Scheme would facilitate economic growth and employment generation?

Ans. Substitution of use of Kerosene with electricity for lighting purposes would reduce annual subsidy on Kerosene and would also help reduce the import of petroleum products. Electricity in each home would provide improved access to all kind of communications like Radio, Television, Internet, mobile etc. through which everyone would be able to access all kind of important information available through these communication mediums. Farmers can access information about new and improved agriculture techniques, agro-machinery, quality seeds etc. resulting in significant increase in agriculture production and consequently increase in income. Farmers and youths can also explore the possibilities of setting up agro based small industries.

Availability of reliable electricity services would also facilitate establishment of new shops of daily use goods, fabrication workshops, flour mills, cottage industries etc. and such economic activities would generate direct as well indirect employment. Implementation of scheme itself would result into employment generation in view of the requirement of semi-skilled / skilled manpower for execution of works of household electrification. About 1000 lakh man-days works would be generated for implementation of the scheme.

The expenditure of over Rs 16,000 crore will create positive externalities which will further help in generating employment and benefit the economy.

Qs. No.17 Is there any plan for creating awareness amongst public at large about the Scheme so that more & more people are benefited from the Scheme ?

Ans. Government of India would take up publicity campaign through Radio, Print Media, Television, Sign Boards etc. Lack of awareness about procedure to obtain electricity connection including cost of connection, uses

of electricity, cost of uses vis-à-vis Kerosene, benefits of using electricity (Direct & Indirect) etc. has been cited as one of the major reasons of slow progress on household electrification in various research studies.

Therefore wide multi-media campaign would be undertaken to make people aware of all aspects the Scheme. The DISCOM officials would also organise camps in rural areas for creating awareness about electricity as well as Saubhagya. School teachers, Gram Panchayat members, local literate/educated youth would also be associated in the awareness campaign.

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