

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF POWER

RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.2539
ANSWERED ON 10.08.2026

CONSUMER CONCERNS ON SMART ELECTRICITY METERS

2539 SHRI SANJAY RAUT:

Will the Minister of **POWER** be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government is aware of complaints of higher electricity bills after installation of smart prepaid meters compared to conventional meters;
- (b) whether any independent technical audit has verified the accuracy and billing methodology of smart meters, if so, the details thereof;
- (c) the State-wise number of consumer complaints on smart meter billing during the last three years and action taken thereon;
- (d) whether Government proposes to provide consumers the option of independent meter testing and conventional meters in unresolved billing disputes; and
- (e) the safeguards and grievance redressal mechanisms to prevent erroneous billing and protect consumer interests under the Smart Meter National Programme?

A N S W E R

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF POWER

(SHRI SHRIPAD NAIK)

(a) to (e) : Electricity being a concurrent subject, supply and distribution of electricity to consumers is within the purview of the respective distribution utility which functions under the guidance of the respective State Government and State Electricity Regulatory Commission. Consumer grievances and complaints relating to metering and billing, including those related to smart meters, are dealt with by the distribution utility concerned.

Government of India launched the Revamped Distribution Sector Scheme (RDSS) in July, 2021 with the objective of improving the quality of power through a financially sustainable and operationally efficient distribution sector. Installation of smart meters for consumers and system (feeder and distribution transformer) is an important intervention under the scheme, which leads to improved operations of distribution utilities through improved billing and collection efficiency and better energy accounting. Under the scheme, smart metering works for 19.79 crore consumers, 2.05 lakh feeders and 52.53 lakh Distribution Transformers (DTs), totalling 20.33 crore smart meters, have been sanctioned based on the proposals submitted by the States/ distribution utilities, and 5.73 crore smart meters have been installed upto June 2026. In total, 7.24 crore smart meters have been installed across the country under various schemes, including States' own schemes. The benefits provided by smart meters for consumers include accurate billing due to elimination of manual meter reading errors, greater transparency, mobile application-based consumption monitoring and enablement of Time-of-Day consumption.

Further, Government of India has issued guidelines, advisories and Standard Operating Procedures (SoPs) for smart meters, which, inter alia, include the following:

- i. Smart meters to adhere to the relevant technical and quality standards as per the BIS (Bureau of Indian Standards) certification.
- ii. Installation of check meters to verify the readings of smart meters on a random basis and mandatory installation in case of consumer complaints which provides consumers the option of independent meter testing.
- iii. No penalty on consumers based on maximum demand recorded by smart meters; and a mechanism for recovery of past arrears in easy instalments.
- iv. Smart meter mobile applications for consumption monitoring, convenience of recharge in small denominations, and advance alerts for low balance and emergency credit.
- v. Provisions for multiple recharge options, consumer feedback mechanism, effective complaint resolution mechanism and comprehensive consumer engagement campaigns.

As per the framework under the scheme, including the Standard Bidding Document (SBD) for smart metering, Factory Acceptance Tests (FAT) are carried out for smart meters, as per the procedures defined in the BIS standards. Further, random samples are also sent to third party NABL (National Accreditation Board for Testing and Calibration Laboratories) laboratories for testing of the smart meters in addition to sample smart meter lot testing at the testing laboratories of the distribution utilities.

A third party verification of smart meters was initiated for 2 distribution utilities in the States of Bihar and Gujarat, the scope of the same has been expanded to other States covering Gujarat, Assam, Bihar, Rajasthan and Andhra Pradesh.

The distribution utilities provide internal grievance redressal mechanisms to resolve complaints related to metering, billing, etc. In addition to this, a multi-tier structure for Consumer Grievance Redressal Forum (CGRF) has been established by the Distribution Utility/ State as per the provisions of Electricity (Rights of Consumers) Rules, 2020. If a consumer is dissatisfied with the resolution provided by the utility, the consumer may approach the CGRF and, thereafter, the Electricity Ombudsman, for resolution. As per the Rules, the Electricity Regulatory Commissions are also required to notify standards of performance for the utilities, which specify the time periods for resolution of various electricity related complaints.
