

Sub: In the matter of Petition seeking relaxation and exemption under Clause 8.1 read with Clause 11.19 & clause 11.22 of the Madhya Pradesh Electricity Supply Code 2021 form mandatory installation of smart pre-payment meter or pre-payment meter for all new connections and to align the relevant provisions of the Madhya Pradesh Electricity Supply Code 2021 with MP State Discoms Smart Metering Plan under Revamped Distribution Sector Scheme issued by Ministry of Power, Government of India (P. No. 17/2022)

Order

(Hearing through Video Conferencing)

Date of order: 29.07.2022

- | | |
|--|--------------------|
| i. MP Power Management Co. Ltd. (MPPMCL): | Petitioners |
| ii. MP Poorv Kshetra Vidyut Vitran Co. Ltd; (East Discom): | |
| iii. MP Paschim Kshetra Vidyut Vitran Co. Ltd; (West Discom): | |
| iv. MP Madhya Kshetra Vidyut Vitran Co. Ltd (Central Discom): | |

Shri. Shailendra Saxena, CGM (RM), Shri. Ajasra Gupta, Sr. DGM (RM) and Shri. Lokesh Malviya, DGM (RM) appeared on behalf of MPPMCL. Shri. Sitaram Bamanke, CE (Smart Meter) appeared on behalf of West Discom. Shri. Deepak Chandela, DGM appeared on behalf of East Discom. Shri. Inayat Ali Khan, DGM appeared on behalf of Central Discom.

2) The Petitioner has filed the subject petition for seeking relaxation and exemption under Clause 8.1 read with Clause 11.19 & clause 11.22 of the MPERC Supply code 2021 from mandatory installation of smart pre-payment meter or pre-payment meter for all new connections. The petitioners have made the following prayers :

- i. To align the relevant provisions of Madhya Pradesh Supply Code, 2021 towards installation/replacement of Smart or Pre-payment meters for new/existing consumers in line with the Metering Plan proposed by MP Discoms under RDSS Scheme;*
- ii. To provide relaxation under Clause 8.1 read with Clause 11.19 & Clause 11.22 of the Supply Code, 2021 so as to allow Discoms to service any new connection with normal meter till the time roll out of Smart Meters is done in the State under RDSS Scheme;*
- iii. To provide relaxation under Clause 8.1 read with Clause 11.19 & Clause 11.22 of the Supply Code, 2021 so as to allow Discoms to service any new connection with Smart*

Meters only in the clusters where the system for Smart Metering is developed in the State under RDSS Scheme;

iv. To provide exemption from installation of Smart Pre-payment Meters or Pre-payment Meters in rural, locations where communication issues are faced, in such areas where the installation of Smart meters have no financial viability, and agricultural consumers;

- 3) At the hearing held on 12.04.2022, the petition was admitted. Vide letter dated 25.04.22 petitioner was directed to file additional information and clarification on some of the issues.
- 4) At the next hearing held on 10.05.2022, on the request of petitioner, the Commission had granted three weeks' for furnishing additional information sought in the matter.
- 5) During next hearing held on 31.05.2022, the petitioners informed that competent approval for implementation of RDSS scheme in the State has been obtained. As per sanction granted by the Competent Authority vide PFC letter dated 17.03.2022 to the State Discoms for consumer and DT metering, time line under Phase -1 and Phase 2 are as under :-

Table-1

<i>Particular</i>	<i>As per MoP Notification & RDSS Guidelines</i>	<i>As Proposed by Discoms</i>	<i>As per Sanction Letter</i>
<i>Consumer Metering</i>			
<i>Phase - 1</i>			
<i>All Division of AMRUT cities, with AT&C > 15%</i>	<i>December-2023</i>	<i>December-2023</i>	<i>December-2023</i>
<i>Urban Division with >50% Urban consumers & AT&C >15%</i>	<i>December-2023</i>	<i>December-2023</i>	<i>December-2023</i>
<i>Other Divisions with AT&C > 25% in base year</i>	<i>December-2023</i>	<i>March-2025</i>	<i>December-2023</i>
<i>Industrial and Commercial consumers</i>	<i>December-2023</i>	<i>December-2023</i>	<i>December-2023</i>
<i>All Government offices at Block level and above</i>	<i>December-2023</i>	<i>December-2023</i>	<i>December-2023</i>
<i>Phase - 2</i>			
<i>Urban Divisions with 50% Urban consumers & AT&C ≤ 15%</i>	<i>March-2025</i>	<i>March-2025</i>	<i>March-2025</i>
<i>All Other Division with AT&C ≤ 25%in base year</i>	<i>March-2025</i>	<i>March-2025</i>	<i>March-2025</i>
<i>DT Metering</i>			
<i>Phase - 1</i>	<i>December-2023</i>	<i>December-2023</i>	<i>March-2023</i>

<i>Particular</i>	<i>As per MoP Notification & RDSS Guidelines</i>	<i>As Proposed by Discoms</i>	<i>As per Sanction Letter</i>
Phase - 2	March-2025	March-2025	December-2023

6) Subsequently, additional information sought in the matter was submitted by the petitioner on 02.06.2022 whereby the petitioner has revised his prayer also in light of sanction granted by the Competent Authority and sought following relaxation :-

- i. To allow the Discoms to serve all new service connections and replacement of stop/ defective meters with normal meter till the time roll out of Smart Meters begins under Phase I of RDSS Scheme in the State.*
- ii. To allow the Discoms to serve a new service connection and replacement of stop/ defective meter during the implementation of Phase I with Smart Meters only if the same falls in the selected feeder of consumers wherein the Smart Metering is under implementation at that moment of time or is already implemented under RDSS. Other new service connection request or replacement of stop/ defective meter for the other feeders of Phase I will be provided with normal meter till the time those feeders are taken up for implementation of Smart Metering.*
- iii. To allow the Discoms to serve a new service connection and replacement of stop/ defective meters with normal meter in feeders that falls under Phase II implementation of Smart Metering Plan under RDSS, till commencement of Phase II of RDSS Scheme. Further, after commencement of implementation under Phase II, for serving a new service connection or replacement of stop/ defective meter similar relaxation as sought in Point (ii) above shall be equally granted.*
- iv. To allow the Discoms to serve a new service connection for consumers with low consumption/ low revenue with prepaid meters (without AMI) in OPEX mode as per plan under the RDSS scheme.*
- v. To give exemption from installation of Smart Pre-payment Meters or Pre-payment Meters for any new as well as existing agricultural consumers.*
- vi. To grant liberty to re-approach the Commission for appropriate relief in pursuance to any difficulties that may arise during the implementation of Smart Metering under RDSS.*

7) In reply to the Commission's queries, and substantiating the reasons for aforesaid relaxations in the matter, the petitioner has made following broad submission:-

- i. With regard to status of approval of RDSS scheme from Central Govt. , it is submitted that that the Central Government on 17th March 2022 through PFC (the Nodal Agency for RDSS) sanctioned the projects to the three Discoms under RDSS.*

- ii. *Further, in line with the approved Sanction Letters, the initial proposal of RDSS plan were revised and presented to Distribution Reforms Committee (DRC) on 24th March 2022. After the consent of DRC, the proposals were put up before the State Cabinet and the State Cabinet accorded its approval on revised proposal on 24 May 2022. Based on aforesaid approval, the implementation agreement shall be signed and subsequently the implementation of Smart Metering shall begin in the State of MP.*
- iii. *Further, as regard the variation in relaxation sought in the petition with respect to RDSS scheme approved by the Central Govt., it is submitted by the petitioner that in the initial proposal of RDSS Scheme and also in the Petition, the Petitioners have proposed to cover metering of all rural consumers of divisions having AT&C losses > 25% in Phase-II for meterization. However, as per Sanction letter the same has been specified by Central Government to cover in Phase I, i.e., by December-2023.*
- iv. *Further, it is submitted that in the Petition as well as in initial RDSS proposal, the Petitioners have sought exemption for installation of Smart Pre-payment Meters or Pre-payment Meters in rural, remote locations (where communication issues are faced). However, as per Sanction Letter it has been mentioned that the State is required to install prepaid meters without AMI in OPEX mode for consumers with low consumption/ low revenue as per phasing of metering under the scheme. The relevant extract from the Sanction Letter is reproduced below:*

“12. As per decision of Monitoring Committee, the State to install prepaid meters without AMI in OPEX mode for consumers with low consumption/ low revenue as per phasing of smart metering under the scheme. Accordingly, Discom is requested to submit proposal in this regard for putting up the same in the Monitoring Committee meeting at the earliest”

Based on above, the Petitioners requested to allow the Discoms to service new connection for consumers with low consumption/ low revenue with prepaid meters (without AMI) in OPEX mode as per phasing of smart metering under the RDSS scheme.

- v. *In addition to above, the Petitioners have sought certain relaxation only in the Petition due to various practical challenges faced in compliance of Clause 8.1 of the MP Electricity Supply Code 2021. In this regard the Petitioners wishes to reiterate that as per Clause 8.1 of the MP Electricity Supply Code 2021, all new connections are to be served through Smart pre-payment meter or pre-payment meter only. However, as already elaborated in the Petition that for Smart Metering, certain pre-requisites must be fulfilled prior to its implementation. Therefore, it is impracticable to release a new connection till prerequisites/ infrastructure for Smart Metering (i.e., server, network, integration with various modules like HES, MDM) are developed. Accordingly, the Petitioners have sought relaxation in the Petition so as to allow the service of all new connections and replacement of existing Stop, Defective & Burnt meters with normal*

meter/non-smart meter till the time roll out of Smart Meters begins under Phase I of RDSS Scheme in the State. In Other word the provision of supply code, 2021 regarding Smart Meters and Pre-paid Meters is to be kept in abeyance till the commencement of Phase I of Smart Metering plan in RDSS.

- vi. *Further, the implementation of Smart Metering under RDSS Scheme is planned on a phase-wise manner and further on feeder-wise manner within the phase. Accordingly, the Petitioners have also floated the tender for implementation of smart metering wherein under 'Schedule A: Project Implementation Schedule' it has been specified that vender is required to install Smart Meter in feeder wise manner. The relevant extract from the tender is as reproduced below:*

SCHEDULE A: PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE

“Meter installation shall be done feeder wise, AMISP (Advance Metering Infrastructure Service provider) have to replace all the meters in a feeder with Smart Meter (Including DTR meter & Consumer’s meter)”.

It is submitted that feeders wherein the prerequisites/ infrastructure for Smart Metering are yet be developed, it will be impracticable for Discoms to service a new connection request with Smart Meter on standalone basis till the time that feeder is taken up for implementation of Smart Metering. Further, as per guidelines of RDSS the funds for prepaid Smart Metering will be made available to the Discoms only after installation, commissioning and demonstration of prepaid recharge in the area specified by the Discoms. Hence, the feeder wise implementation with complete infrastructure will help to achieve the scheme mandate and obtain grant release. Therefore, in absence of prerequisites/ infrastructure for Smart Metering, even if a new service connection is provided with smart meter on standalone basis, the Discoms will not be able to demonstrate prepaid recharge and hence shall not be eligible for release of funds. Accordingly, the Petitioners have sought the aforesaid relaxation and revised their prayer

- vii. *Also, MoP vide its gazette notification No. F.No. 23/35/2019-R&R. dated 17th August, 2021 in pursuance to the provisions made in clause 4(1) (b) of the CEA (Installation and Operation of Meters) (Amendment) Regulations, 2019 has excluded agricultural consumers from Smart Metering.*
- viii. *Accordingly, exemption is sought from installation of Smart Pre-payment Meters or Pre-payment Meters for any new as well as existing agricultural consumers.*
- ix. *It is further submitted that such large-scale implementation of Smart Metering is planned for the first time, hence, there may be many difficult situations / unforeseen circumstances that may arise during the implementation period such as technical issues, supply related issues, contractual difficulties, project delays, availability of Smart Meters etc. Therefore, it is requested that the Petitioners should be given liberty to re-approach the Commission for appropriate relief in*

accordance with any difficulties that may arise during the implementation of Smart Metering under RDSS.

- x. *The Petitioners find that Clause 8.1 of MP Electricity Supply Code 2021 has given powers to the Commission for exception to the Smart meter or prepayment meter and also to allow the deviation from installation of the smart pre-paid meter or pre-payment meter. The relevant extract is as reproduced below:*

“.....any exception to the Smart meter or prepayment meter shall have to be duly approved by the Commission and the Commission, while doing so, shall record proper justification for allowing the deviation from installation of the smart pre-payment meter or prepayment meter”

Accordingly, the Petitioners have sought the aforesaid relaxations.

- xi. *It is further clarified by the Petitioners that they are not seeking any amendments in Supply Code, they are requesting the Commission to exercise the power conferred in clause 8.1 of MP Electricity Supply Code, 2021 and to allow aforesaid exception in the Smart meter or prepayment meter implementation. Further, the Commission if find necessary may amend the Clause 8.1 of MP Electricity Supply Code in accordance with aforesaid prayer.*
- xii. *It is submitted the timelines proposed for metering of consumers in urban areas and for DT meters were in accordance with the meterisation timelines notified by MoP through its notification dated 17 August 2021 in pursuance to CEA (Installation and Operations of Meters)(Amendments) Regulations 2019.*
- xiii. *As regard to rural consumers of divisions having AT&C > 25%,Discoms have proposed to consider the same in Phase-II for meterization However, as per Sanction letter the same has been specified to cover in Phase I, i.e., by December-2023.*
- xiv. *Further, as regard to DT metering, it was decided during the 5th MCM that DISCOMs will have to complete 100% DT Metering in Phase - I areas by March 2023 and in remaining areas by December 2023 to facilitate energy accounting. Accordingly, DT metering timelines have been changed. It is to be noted that the timelines approved by the MoP in the Sanction Letter towards DT Metering is in variation with its notification/RDSS guidelines.*
- xv. *The Petitioner would further like to emphasize that the timelines approved for metering under phase I, (i.e., December 2023) is to additionally incentivize the Discoms, i.e., the Discoms will be eligible for additional incentive @ 7.5% of the cost per consumer meter worked out for the whole project or Rs. 450 per consumer meter, whichever is lower, if the meters are installed within the targeted timeline of first phase. The relevant extract from the RDSS guidelines is as reproduced below:*

“5.1.3 States/UTs would be incentivised for deployment of prepaid Smart

meters by December, 2023. An incentive @ 7.5% of the cost per consumer meter worked out for the whole project or Rs. 450 per consumer meter, whichever is lower, would be provided for “Other than Special Category States” for prepaid Smart meters installed within the targeted timeline of first phase mission i.e. by December, 2023. The incentive for Special Category States would be @11.25% of the cost per consumer meter worked out for the whole project or Rs. 675 per consumer meter, whichever is lower.....”

xvi. It is submitted that in case the Discoms are not able to achieve the targeted timelines as specified for phase I, the Discoms will not be eligible for aforesaid additional incentives however, the Discoms shall continue eligible to claim the base grant @15% of the approved cost of the metering works including the operational cost, or Rs. 900 per meter, whichever is lower, for the meters which may spill over to next phase till the sunset date for the Smart Metering which is 31.03.2025.

xvii. It is submitted that based on its past experience and considering such a large-scale implementation of Smart Metering at Pan India level, the Discoms are estimating that the aforesaid timelines of phase I (which is around 1.6 years hence) are very stringent to achieve. None of the venders are committing or showing interest for above specified timelines. Although, the Discoms are striving hard to complete the metering as per specified timelines, Discoms have factored-in the practical challenges and accordingly floated tenders for phase I metering wherein the implementation timelines for installation and integration of Smart Meters have been specified as two and half years (i.e., 30 Months).The aforesaid timelines as per tender document though vary from MoP specified timelines for Phase I but is within the sunset for the Smart Metering of RDSS Scheme. Hence, the Petitioners request that while giving the relaxation to install Smart Meters and to replace stop/defective/burnt meters, the timelines specified under phase I of RDSS should not be linked with relaxation sought, rather the conditional relaxation for installation of the Smart Meters and to replace stop/defective/burnt meters should be given till the sunset date for the Smart Metering which is 31.03.2025.

xviii. As regards reasons for not covering agriculture DTRs under phase I & II of the Scheme, it is submitted that, Agriculture DTRs have been excluded from installation of smart meters in the proposals by Discoms and the same has been accepted by Nodal Agency.

8) Further, the Commission vide letter dated 16.06.2022 had sought some more information which was submitted by the petitioners vide their letter dated 30.06.22. The broad submission made by the petitioners viz. East , West and Central Discoms are as under :-

- a. The East, West and Central Discoms have submitted the feeder wise execution plan against the Phase-1 and stated that feeder wise execution plan will be carried out based on priority defined.
- b. As regard commencement schedule for rolling out RDSS scheme under phase I, the Discoms have submitted the expected time lines for issuing Tenders and work award while for Phase 2, it is stated that commencement schedule is under discussion.
- c. In regard to the clarification sought on petitioners' request to allow the Discoms to service new connection for consumers with low consumption/ low revenue with prepaid meters (without AMI) in OPEX mode as per phasing of smart metering under the RDSS scheme, the Petitioner informed that no proposal has been submitted for approval to Monitoring Committee on behalf of Discoms.

The Commission's Observations and findings: -

- 9) The Commission has noted that the Government of India has launched Revamped Distribution Sector Scheme (RDSS) with an objective of improving quality, reliability and affordability of Power Supply to consumer through a financially sustainable and operationally efficient distribution sector. The scheme has targeted to reduce AT&C losses to pan-India levels of 12-15% and to reduce ACS & ARR gap to zero by FY 2024-25. This scheme is reforms based and result linked. One of the components of the scheme is meterisation through smart and prepaid meters. The Scheme provides financial assistance to the participant States for implementing projects to be covered under this scheme. Government of India is partially financing meterisation program under the scheme.
- 10) Under Section 50 of the Electricity Act, 2003, the Commission has notified Electricity Supply Code 2021 which is applicable for the Distribution licensees in the State. It includes regulations related to system of supply, new power supply, metering and billing etc. Regarding meterisation, Clause 8.1 of this Regulation provides that no new connection shall be given without a meter and such meter shall be a smart pre-payment meter or pre-payment meter of appropriate specification complying with relevant standards. Any exception to the smart meter or prepayment meter shall have to be duly approved by the Commission.

11) In order to carry out meterisation in accordance with their proposal under RDSS for the Discoms, the petitioner MPPMCL and Discoms jointly filed the Petition with the following initial prayer:-

- i. To align the relevant provisions of Madhya Pradesh Electricity Supply Code, 2021 towards installation/replacement of Smart or Pre-payment meters for new/existing consumers in line with the Metering Plan proposed by MP Discoms under RDSS Scheme;*
- ii. To provide relaxation under Clause 8.1 read with Clause 11.19 & Clause 11.22 of the Supply Code, 2021 so as to allow Discoms to service any new connection with normal meter till the time roll out of Smart Meters is done in the State under RDSS Scheme;*
- iii. To provide relaxation under Clause 8.1 read with Clause 11.19 & Clause 11.22 of the Supply Code, 2021 so as to allow Discoms to service any new connection with Smart Meters only in the clusters where the system for Smart Metering is developed in the State under RDSS Scheme;*
- iv. To provide exemption from installation of Smart Pre-payment Meters or Pre-payment Meters in rural, locations where communication issues are faced, in such areas where the installation of Smart meters have no financial viability, and agricultural consumers;*

12) Petition was admitted by the Commission on dated 12.04.2022. On scrutiny of the proposal of meterisation submitted by the Petitioner, the Commission sought some clarifications and additional information vide letter dated 25.04.2022. Meanwhile, after obtaining the approval from Distribution Reforms Committee (DRC) as well as approval from the State Cabinet, a complete scheme under RDSS was submitted by the Petitioners to the Ministry of Power for approval. Some variations were proposed with respect to timeline for meterisation in the proposal submitted by the Petitioners to the Ministry of Power. However, proposed variations were not considered and vide letter dated 17.03.2022 approval was accorded with some deviations. Accordingly, the Petitioner has submitted the revised prayer and requested for approval as per the sanctions accorded by the Competent Authority vide letter dated 17.03.2022. Timeline for meterisation as per sanctioned letter is summarized below:-

Table-2

<i>Particular</i>	<i>As per Sanction Letter dated 17.03.2022 issued by the Competent Authority</i>
<u>Consumer Metering</u>	
Phase - 1	
<i>All Division of AMRUT cities, with AT&C > 15%</i>	<i>December-2023</i>
<i>Urban Division with >50% Urban consumers & AT&C >15%</i>	<i>December-2023</i>
<i>Other Divisions with AT&C > 25% in base year</i>	<i>December-2023</i>
<i>Industrial and Commercial consumers</i>	<i>December-2023</i>
<i>All Government offices at Block level and above</i>	<i>December-2023</i>
Phase - 2	
<i>Urban Divisions with 50% Urban consumers & AT&C ≤ 15%</i>	<i>March-2025</i>
<i>All Other Division with AT&C ≤ 25% in base year</i>	<i>March-2025</i>
<u>DT Metering</u>	
<i>Phase – 1 areas</i>	<i>March-2023</i>
<i>Phase – 2 areas</i>	<i>December-2023</i>

According to the aforesaid sanctioned timeline, the petitioner in his additional submission has prayed for the following relaxation:-

- i. To allow the Discoms to serve all new service connections and replacement of stop/ defective meters with normal meter till the time roll out of Smart Meters begins under Phase I of RDSS Scheme in the State.*
- ii. To allow the Discoms to serve a new service connection and replacement of stop/ defective meter during the implementation of Phase I with Smart Meters only if the same falls in the selected feeder of consumers wherein the Smart Metering is under implementation at that moment of time or is already*

implemented under RDSS. Other new service connection request or replacement of stop/ defective meter for the other feeders of Phase I will be provided with normal meter till the time those feeders are taken up for implementation of Smart Metering.

- iii. To allow the Discoms to serve a new service connection and replacement of stop/ defective meters with normal meter in feeders that falls under Phase II implementation of Smart Metering Plan under RDSS, till commencement of Phase II of RDSS Scheme. Further, after commencement of implementation under Phase II, for serving a new service connection or replacement of stop/ defective meter similar relaxation as sought in Point (ii) above shall be equally granted.*
 - iv. To allow the Discoms to serve a new service connection for consumers with low consumption/ low revenue with prepaid meters (without AMI) in OPEX mode as per plan under the RDSS scheme.*
 - v. To give exemption from installation of Smart Pre-payment Meters or Pre-payment Meters for any new as well as existing agricultural consumers.*
 - vi. To grant liberty to re-approach the Commission for appropriate relief in pursuance to any difficulties that may arise during the implementation of Smart Metering under RDSS.*
- 13) On going through the sanctioned timelines and revised request made by the Petitioners, the Commission has observed following:-
- i. The petitioner has requested to allow the Discoms to service new connections and replacement of existing stopped/defective and burnt meters with normal meters/non-smart meter till the time roll out of smart meters begins under phase 1 and 2 of RDSS scheme. Regarding meterisation, provisions under Clause 8.1 of the Supply Code are as under:-
“No new connection shall be given without a meter and such meter shall be the smart pre-payment meter or pre-payment meter and cut-out or a Miniature Circuit Breaker (MCB) or Circuit Breaker (CB) of appropriate specification complying with relevant standards. The Licensee should procure sufficient quantity of suitable meters/metering equipments for new service connections, providing meters for unmetered connections and replacement of stopped/defective meters/ metering equipments. Any exception to the

smart meter or prepayment meter shall have to be duly approved by the Commission. The Commission, while doing so, shall record proper justification for allowing the deviation from installation of the smart prepaid meter or pre payment meter”.

- ii. With regard to aforesaid request, the petitioner submitted that for smart metering, certain prerequisite must be fulfilled. The petitioner stated that it is impractical to release a new connection with smart meter without having a proper infrastructure in place i.e., server, network, integration with various modules etc. The Commission appreciates the concern of the Petitioner that for proper utilisation of the smart meter, development of an appropriate communication network infrastructure is essential. Petitioners also mentioned that, during development phase of such system, the Discoms shall require to release new connections. They shall also be required to replace stopped/defective and burnt meters. Considering these difficulties, request of the Petitioner to allow normal meters for releasing new connection and for replacement of stopped/defective/burnt meters in the intermediate period, has merit. Therefore, the Commission has decided to invoke power vested with it under clause 8.1 read with clauses 11.19 and 11.22 of Madhya Pradesh Electricity Supply Code 2021 and has decided to relax the condition of providing new connection with smart pre-payment meter or pre-payment meter for the intermediate period i.e. till the time-line prescribed by the MoP, GoI for installation of smart meter under RDSS Scheme approved vide their letter dated 17/03/2022.

This condition shall be applicable for replacement of the stopped/defective/burnt meters as well. However, the Petitioners are directed to strictly follow the time-lines prescribed by the Central Government vide their letter dated 17/3/2022 for installation of smart meters under Phase 1 and 2 under RDSS.

- iii. With regard to the request of the Petitioners to allow the Discoms to serve new service connection for consumer in low consumption/ low revenue areas with prepaid meter without AMI in OPEX mode as per plan under the approved RDSS scheme, the relevant Clause 12 of the sanction letter no 76020,76021 and 76022 dated 17/03/2022 for Central, West and East Discom, respectively is reproduced below:-

“As per decision of monitoring committee, the state to install prepaid meters without AMI in OPEX mode for consumers with low consumption/low revenue as per phasing of smart metering under the scheme. Accordingly Discom is requested to submit proposal in this regard for putting up the same in the monitoring committee meeting at the earliest”.

Accordingly, the Commission hereby accords approval to the above request, subject to prior approval of the Monitoring Committee of Govt. of India in this regard.

14) The Petitioners also prayed to give exemption from installation of smart prepayment meters or prepayment meters for any new as well as existing agricultural consumers. The Petitioners submitted that shifting such subsidized agricultural consumers on smart metering does not form a business proposition as the pay back period for these consumers is very long. The Petitioners further submitted that cost of a smart meter is approximately Rs. 6,000 to 8,000. For such smart meters, Govt. of India is partially funding the cost which is limited to Rs. 900 per meter only. It is difficult to get return on investment on smart meters for such subsidized category of consumers as pay back period for such meters is around 9 years. Petitioners stated that because of these conditions, Discoms are not in a financial position to undertake such Capex work towards smart metering with their own funds/loans. Further, these consumers are widely scattered and remotely located in rural areas, which makes it difficult to provide smart meters in such scattered areas. Therefore, Petitioners have requested that they should be given exemption from providing smart meter for new and existing agricultural consumers. Moreover, these consumers are not included in the RDSS scheme for smart metering and therefore Govt. grant is not available in respect of such consumers. Considering these difficulties, the Commission decided to allow the prayer for relaxation in providing smart metering for agricultural consumers. However, the situation shall be reviewed by the Commission periodically to ascertain feasibility of smart meters in agricultural sector.

15) In view of the relaxation given above, the Commission hereby directs the Petitioners to adhere to the timeline prescribed by the Central Government for smart metering under phase 1 and 2 of RDSS Scheme communicated vide their letter dated 17/03/2022. However, as requested in the prayer, the petitioners are allowed to execute these works feeder wise. The Petitioners shall incorporate these works in their Capex plan. The Commission further directs MPPMCL to furnish consolidated information regarding targets and achievement on quarterly basis to the Commission within 15 days from the end of respective quarters for the aforesaid meterisation programme. With above directions the petition stands disposed of.

(Gopal Srivastava)
Member (Law)

(Mukul Dhariwal)
Member

(S.P.S. Parihar)
Chairman