

## Concerns with Saubhagya scheme

### What is the issue?

\n\n

\n

- Pradhan Mantri Sahaj Bijli Har Ghar Yojana ('Saubhagya') launched in September.

\n

- The policy has set a standard for itself without enough focus on its capacity to deliver results.

\n

\n\n

### What is Saubhagya scheme about?

\n\n

\n

- This new scheme is just a way of refurbishing the Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Gram Jyoti Yojana (DDUGJY).

\n

- The earlier scheme of rural electrification launched in July 2015, which aimed to electrify all un-electrified villages by May 2018.

\n

- The objective of the Saubhagya scheme is to provide energy access to all by last mile connectivity to achieve universal household electrification in the country.

\n

- Saubhagya makes grandiose promises to provide a free electricity connection to all willing Below Poverty Line households.

\n

- It claims to ensure electrification of all willing households in the country on a payment of Rs. 500, which shall be recovered by the power distribution companies in 10 instalments along with electricity bills.

\n

\n\n

### What are practical difficulties with the scheme?

\n\n

\n

- **Payment of Bills** -It expects the poor to pay the bills without providing any subsidy to ease their burden.

\n

- Expecting poor households to bear the recurring burden of bills as per the prevailing tariff of DISCOMs is unimaginable.

\n

- The government has conveniently overlooked the fact that for the poor in some States, the inability to pay an electricity bill is a big impediment

\n

- **Efficiency** -Even if 90% of households are electrified in villages, there is no promise of minimum hours of supply.

\n

- There is a power shortage even at this moment leading to scheduled and unscheduled load shedding, often up to 10 hours or more.

\n

- **Additional capability** - This scheme would potentially require an additional 28,000 MW and additional energy of about 80,000 million units per annum, which is roughly 7% of India's current installed power capacity.

\n

- Considering these huge lapses managing this additional demand would prove to be challenging.

\n

\n\n

\n\n

**Source: The Hindu**

\n

