**REC Limited and J-PAL South Asia enter data-sharing agreement to improve power distribution and service delivery in India**

**Gurugram, India, September 22, 2021**: REC Limited (formerly Rural Electrification Corporation Limited), a public infrastructure finance company under the Ministry of Power, Government of India, and the Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab (J-PAL) South Asia are partnering to create an annual, data-based assessment of 79 public and private power distribution companies (DISCOMS) across the country to improve consumer service delivery and ensure reliable electricity supply to consumers.

Under this partnership, REC and J-PAL South Asia will collaborate to leverage existing data on DISCOMS’ services to diagnose trends and identify gaps in the quality of power supply. These datasets will be used to create a “consumer service index” that will rank companies based on dimensions of service delivery—supply hours, grievance redressal systems, and billing details and timelines among others.

REC and J-PAL South Asia will engage in dialogues to address the challenges faced by DISCOMS that emerge from this yearly assessment as well as pilot and test potential solutions using randomised evaluations. J-PAL South Asia will also conduct scoping studies to evaluate the effectiveness of innovative solutions like smart metering for more accurate and transparent billing systems as well as other programmes undertaken by REC.

Through this partnership, REC and J-PAL South Asia aim to provide a transparent and evidence-based channel for DISCOMS to identify gaps in their services as well as ensure a more reliable supply of power to households in line with the Electricity (Rights of Consumers) Rules of 2020. The annual ranking report of DISCOMS will also be available to the public, creating pathways for greater accountability in the provision of electricity across states.

The agreement was signed during a ceremony with Executive Director of REC R Lakshmanan (IAS) and Executive Director of J-PAL South Asia Shobhini Mukerji.

Shobhini Mukerji, Executive Director of J-PAL South Asia said, “We are pleased to be partnering with REC Limited to improve the quality of electricity supply using an exhaustive, data-driven approach to assess the functioning of power distribution in India. Existing sources of data—particularly routinely collected administrative data—are an invaluable resource for policy makers. By making smart use of existing data from the power sector, we can make significant strides towards identifying and addressing the daily power-related challenges facing individuals across the country.”

J-PAL South Asia will also provide REC Limited with technical research support, led by Professor Nicholas Ryan (Yale University; J-PAL-affiliated Professor), and capacity building on data collection and usage.

Research under this partnership will potentially be a part of J-PAL’s King Climate Action Initiative, which generates evidence and catalyses the scale-up of effective policy and technology solutions at the nexus of climate change and poverty alleviation.

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