

Bangalore as solar city: Blueprint getting ready

BANGALORE: If things go as planned, a study which could go a long way in solving the city's power crisis will be out by October this year.

The study titled 'Solar photo voltaic (PV) rooftop project' which is looking at the techno-economic feasibility of large scale deployment of solar PV in households is being conducted by the Center for Study of Science, Technology and Policy (CSTEP).

A team of five to six people, including senior research fellows Jai Asundi and ShubaV Raghavan are working on the study at CSTEP.

According to Asundi, preliminary analysis shows that the existing set-up is not enough to ensure mass participation. Presently, the state government is mulling over the idea of setting up solar panels on about 10,000 rooftops to produce about 10MW of power.

"Solar power is expensive.

However, it is clean and renewable.

It can augment conventional generation," he says.

"Quantitative and rigorous methods of analysis are being adopted to put together something to form the basis for large scale deployment of solar PV," Asundi added.

Shuba points out that the cost of installing a diesel generator and running it on expensive fuel in large apartment complexes will be comparable to the price of setting up a solar unit.

"While price of diesel may go up in the coming years, solar plants do not incur any running costs except for a marginal maintenance cost. This is a favourable factor," says Shuba.

Cynics however, have called the plan "highly romantic".

"There are technological and policy issues in a country like India," Subha admits. However, it could turn out to be a model for other states.

This study will form the basis on which the government will fulfil its promise of converting Bangalore into a solar city.

As the Germans have shown, trading electricity produced from solar energy on rooftops could soon become a standard practice in the city if the ambitious plan gives positive results.