

AIM FOR THE SUN
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 THE HINDU

Aim for the sun

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COST FRIENDLY

Cost of solar power
 against coal

2014

Rs. 1.8 : Re. 1 per unit

2011

Rs. 7 : Re. 1 per unit

Solar capacity
 building

Tamil Nadu	India
2,042	25
MW	GW

Electricity consumers
 above 500 units

10.34	4
lakh (2014)	lakh (2012)



Study indicates price gap between coal and solar power has come down significantly since 2011, even as electricity tariff for those consuming more than 500 units has risen

Even as a further revision of electricity charges looms large for consumers in the State, a study on solar technology indicates a narrowing price gap compared to conventional technology.

The study, 'How should India drive its solar transformation?' conducted by Tata Power Solar, points out the cost of one kWh of solar power has come down to Rs. 1.8 in 2014 from Rs. 7 in 2011, even as electricity tariff for those consuming more than 500 units has risen from Rs. 4 to Rs. 6.6 (the tariff proposed by the Tamil Nadu Electricity Regulatory Commission or TNERC) between 2012 and 2014.

Energy auditors point out that the introduction of net metering scheme in the State and the determination of the cost of solar generation at Rs. 7 per unit makes a case for installing solar technology if more than 500 units of electricity are being consumed.

The study is an eye-opener for those in this band of consumption, as there is a significant jump in cost in this category. Also, this section of consumers would be hard hit by the proposed revision of Rs. 6.6 per unit from Rs. 5.75.

Data provided by Tangedco to TNERC on the consumption break-up in the State shows that those consuming below 500 units numbered 1.61 crore, above 500 units 8.53 lakh and above 1,000 units 1.81 lakh . The number of consumers falling in the 'above 500 units' category was around four lakh, according to the tariff petition filed by Tangedco in 2012.

N.S. Venkatesan, who has installed a rooftop solar power plant of one-kilowatt capacity and is in the 'above 500 units' category, said the plant yields an average of 3.6 units per day, and has a projected capacity of around 1, 200 units per year.

Proposal for installing solar plants

The study shows that of solar power's total projected capacity of 25 gigawatt (GW) in the country, the State has the capacity to produce 2,042 megawatt. A proposal, 'Solar Bees', aims to install 8.3 million rooftop solar plants, of 3-KW capacity, in the country.