





duce solar energy are workable in housing settlements in Nagapatinam and Ladakh, a more systematic and concerted effort to explore the possibilities and constraints of introducing such systems in Chennai and other fast growing urban areas is required through the cooperative efforts of the various stakeholders.

At a purely theoretical level, the unutilised surface area of the terraces of buildings in the city itself should provide enough incentive to gradually shift to renewable sources like solar energy.

In addition balconies also become potential areas to harvest solar power. Even slopped roofs with tiles can accommodate solar panels. The present technology allows for less conspicuous solar array on the roof and they can harvest more energy with less space.

In residential developments, the immense potential for use of solar energy equipment exists, through solar lights in common areas and open spaces, gateways, solar fans, solar water heaters and even the possibility of solar cookers in the kitchen. While it could dramatically reduce the consumption of electricity, savings in electricity bills could offset the initial investments.

The fact remains that in harnessing it effectively, sev-

eral initiatives are required. A nominal solar power back-up system UPS that can run 2 lights a fan and a TV can cost about Rs. 28,000/-. These systems have a 20-year durability and a battery life of 3 years.

Apprehensions that a cloudy day could mean that there is no solar power need to be allayed. Several solar systems do have back-up energy systems to tide through a few days of cloudy weather.

More user-friendly equipment could also facilitate its use on a larger scale. Concerns voiced by environmentalists on the excessive production of photovoltaic solar cells containing silica also need careful examination before deploying the technology.

An integrated awareness of the benefits and constraints of solar energy and its sustainability over the long term in conserving and protecting our environment is essential. In order to attain these goals, it will be necessary to modify existing courses of instruction and training, as well as energy supply systems, funding and distribution models, standards, statutory regulations and laws in accordance with the new objectives.

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