

GO SOLAR

A CONSUMER CONNECT INITIATIVE

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Momentum of growing solar business has been economical efficiency and not governmental policy

The SPV Route



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SOLAR Photo-Voltaics is essential in the future renewable energy mix, especially for India. It has the biggest energy potential and is needed to cover Indian electricity demand in a sustainable way. Because of its potential to reduce cost, penetration can be achieved by enlarging the SPV market through the recently announced incentives by the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE). It can be scaled up or down, depending on rural, domestic, industrial or large-scale applications. Most importantly, it's reliable with low recurring or maintenance cost.

With 112 MW in total of installed SPV capacity in India, only about 2 MW as actually connected to the grid as of September 2007. This scenario presented a prospect to change when the MNRE announced programmes that seemed destined to add a good dose of grid connected PV to the product mix. This now includes Central Financial Assistance (CFA) schemes along with feed-in-tariff based schemes that give developers a stable and viable basis of investment. West Bengal is leading the stock with substantial investment coming up in SPV in the future.

Of course, the momentum of the growing solar business has been an economical efficiency not governmental policy. From this, grid parity, a point at which solar electricity is equal to or cheaper than conventional grid electricity, is very important. The difference with other re-

newable sources is that the cost of solar power generation is continuously getting lower through new technology and mass production. This will eventually lead the path to demand that is market-driven.

There are a number of ways in which the common man can gain from this form of energy. Some are:

- a) It reduces the energy bill, and in many areas the utilities will buy back any extra electricity that is generated. Central, state financial incentives are also available.

- b) It adds value to one's home

- c) Can gain energy independence

- d) It's a good investment in a sustainable future.

Drawing from the experience in engineering, which is of more than over 30 years, we have imbibed various knowledge, skill and quality quotients in this division. In addition, to develop economies of scale and achieve high conversion efficiency with lower cost per Watt Peak, we have plans to invest consistently in new technologies. All our products are certified and stand guaranteed for 25 years in terms of output and efficiencies.

Experiences in recent years demonstrate that PV markets can be successfully created if the political framework provides the right incentives for investors. The most powerful instrument is the feed-in-tariff. Utilities often hamper independent and decentralized power producers. Legal framework should, therefore, foresee the priority connections and priority feed-in of electricity produced from renewable, decentralized energy sources.

(Chaudhary is Director of Vikram Solar Pvt Ltd)