

Children of Rampura village received the gift of light First community based solar power plant installed in Uttar Pradesh

Rampura, 17 km away from Jhansi in Bundelkhand region, is the first village to get a community based solar power plant (CSPP) in the country. On Republic Day, Development Alternatives in collaboration with Scatec Solar of Norway launched the solar power plant in Rampura.



*Before - kerosene lamps
for light*



*Now – solar lamps lighting
up the village*

For the first time in the history of Rampura, the children can take advantage of the electricity to study, play, listen to the radio and watch TV in the evening, all through the power of solar energy. "If children wanted to study after dusk they would use kerosene lamps or use the light of the small gas flame," says Vimla, but this was never a safe solution. Now, they can really do well in life as they can study for long hours".

The villagers do not have to finish their daily chores before dusk. Shanti Devi said, "Now I don't have to cook before dusk any longer. Earlier I had to cook before darkness fell. Now my children can also study at night."

The Rampura Community Solar Power Plant is a major step towards rural electrification in India. The CSPP in Rampura has a capacity of 8.7 kwp. Power is distributed through a mini-grid. Sixty-nine houses are benefiting from this plant. Use of renewable and clean energy for electricity generation has made Rampura self-sufficient in power supply.



*Children watch the Republic
Day Parade live for the
first time in Rampura*

The Community-based Solar Power Plant pilot project was initiated to test the techno-commercial viability of deploying solar energy for development in rural areas in India. "The aim of this project is to establish a model that is easily replicable and can facilitate a rollout of CSPPs on a large-scale across India" says Dr. Arun Kumar, President, Development Alternatives.

In this Solar Power Plant, community partnership has ensured participation of the community from the beginning for their ownership. A Village Energy Committee (VEC) has been established, a major step to enhance knowledge and skills of rural people in energy management. Local micro-entrepreneurs are planning to setup their enterprises in the village using the power supply from this plant. Priority has been given for supplying power to agriculture, commercial and domestic purposes. CPSP has also ensured growth of local economy which will also enhance energy demand. It has created awareness among the villagers and leading to a process of adopting energy-efficient devices like sprinkler, solar charged batteries and LED bulbs, energy saving practices etc.

The Norwegian Minister for the Environment and International Development, an Indologist, Erik Solheim, an Indologist visited the village on 6th February 2009. Solheim told the villagers: "Your village draws its name from Lord Rama and you will fight the demon of darkness (neglect, underdevelopment and backwardness) with the sunlight.