

# **Energy conservation efforts have a long way to go**

Discussions on brands, prices, offers, and value-additions in a product are common when it comes to buying a gadget for home. However, how many of us tend to know about the energy efficiency of the gadget?

It is easy to achieve 10 per cent energy conservation at homes with just proper handling of the electrical and electronic gadgets. This can be increased to even 25 per cent with more efforts. Yet, effective energy conservation in Coimbatore's domestic sector is just five per cent, says an official of the Tamil Nadu Generation and Distribution Corporation.

Though penetration of awareness is nearly 80 per cent, implementation of the efforts can be improved extensively. Though there is no compulsion to conserve energy and to reduce wastage of electricity, it is social concern and the habit of switching off lights and fans when not needed should be developed from student days. Hence, the corporation conducted "Powerful Coimbatore" programme this year, covering a lakh students.

With increase in urbanisation and affordability levels, use of gadgets has also gone up in houses. The city has nearly four lakh domestic power connections. At least 10,000 connections are those who pay more than Rs. 5,000 as bi-monthly power charges. In Coimbatore, domestic power consumption has increased by 10 per cent.

At the State-level, domestic consumption constitutes 27 per cent of the total power consumption. It is not just mixers, grinders, refrigerator and iron boxes that are commonly used at homes. The list is extensive including cooking ranges, dishwashers, washing machines, air-conditioners, reverse osmosis plants, treadmills, and geysers.

Water heaters, air-conditioners, and dishwashers and washing machines used in heater mode are major power consumers. Nearly 60 per cent of the domestic connections in the city use invertors. At present, there is no system to see whether consumption overshoots the connected load, says the official.

Power consumption shoots up when supply is restored after a power cut. Consumers should look out for energy-efficiency star-labelled products when they buy a gadget for home. The Government should also consider introducing standards and energy efficiency levels for many of these domestic gadgets. Use of emergency lights when there is no power, LEDs for normal lighting, and solar water heaters will help in energy conservation. For instance, when a family of four uses solar water heater, the corporation saves nearly 1,800 units a year.

The Government should introduce incentives to promote energy conservation. Some State Governments have done so, the official adds. Conservation culture can go up further in all sectors, adds S. Ashok, a Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE) certified energy auditor in the city. Industries tend to look at return on investment for conservation. To promote conservation, the managements should take the initiative.

They should look at invisible losses and measure the usage at the load end. When industries purchase machinery, they should look at energy consumption and efficiency of the machine, he says (The Hindu, 20-12-11).