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## IIT-Madras students install solar panels in government girls school

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*Srikanth Vedantam, institution's head, department of engineering design, inaugurated the plant which covers 12 classrooms in the block.*



📷 Students install solar panels at Government girls higher secondary school in Ashok Nagar. (Photo: DC)

**Chennai:** IIT-Madras students installed 1.5 kW solar panels with energy efficient DC (direct current) technology in Government Girls Higher Secondary School at Ashok Nagar here on Friday.

Srikanth Vedantam, institution's head, department of engineering design, inaugurated the plant which covers 12 classrooms in the block. Students who were part of an NGO, Engineers Without Borders (EWB), set up the plant.

"The lights and fans in the block were replaced with specially designed DC lights and fans which consume only half of the power compared to AC (alternating current) appliances", said K.Venkatesh, a fourth-year student in metallurgical and materials engineering.

"The LED fluorescent lights consume 18 watts at full brightness, unlike conventional fluorescent lights that consume 36 watts. The DC fan consumes only 30 watts at maximum speed whereas the conventional fans consume 80 watts at full power," he said.

With the DC based equipment (solar panels, battery and lights, fans) in place, conversion losses are avoided. As a result, solar panels providing 1.5 kW power is sufficient to power lights and fans in the block, which would have otherwise required solar panels to generate six to eight kW power if conventional AC-based technologies had been used.

The project was funded by Deepak Sanghi, proprietor of e-care India Pvt Ltd. and IIT-M alumnus. It was installed and partially funded by Cygni Energy Pvt. Ltd.

The unique DC-based technology was developed by Ashok Jhunjhunwala from department of Electrical Engineering, IIT-M. "We plan to install the solar panels in 10 government schools in the villages where they have power issues. Besides meeting energy need, this solar project will bring awareness about clean energy among students," said D.Gokul, a scientist from Isro and ex-president, EWB, Chennai Chapter.

The students plane to install solar panels also in the remaining four blocks of the school. C.R.Saraswathi, headmistress, Government Girls Higher Secondary School, Ashok Nagar, R.Elango, scientist and former president of Kuthambakkam panchayat, were among those participated.

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