

This home is free from clutter of power, water lines

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One can find freedom from power cuts, mounting water bills, besides eliminate the need for clumsy sewage connections, if only he or she has the green will. The added bonus will a lesser feeling of guilt over contributing to carbon footprints.

Srinivasan Sekar, 50, has done just that. His eco commitment has been such that he does not mind the extra burden that the environment-friendly home that he built puts on his personal finances. For, he believes that investing in Earth's cause can pay rich dividends in the long run.

Sekar has built his two-storey house, that is pleasing in its architectural simplicity, on a 4,000-sqft plot at Sompura near Sarjapur. It optimally harnesses green energy technologies. He recently moved into the new house and is not dependent on the Bescom line or BWSSB's water or sewage connections.

Sekar, who quit his career in the IT industry, has installed 12 solar panels on his rooftop and they more than takes care of the energy needs of the appliances in his house. Reuse and recirculation of water are his mantra so that use of the precious commodity is optimised.

He began construction of the building in April 2012. In August 2012, he started researching and conceptualising the green ideas. Sekar has adopted the slow sand filter technology, approved by World Health Organisation, for clean drinking water.

The drinking water is reused twice - the first time to flush toilets and second to water the gardens and trees. The initial source of water is a rainwater harvesting system that yields 20,000 litres after a good three-hour rain. The rainwater then goes through sand and activated carbon filters for general purpose use, including drinking. Water from showers and wash basins are collected and filtered through a slow sand filter and is chlorinated, for use in toilets and for gardening (after chlorine is depleted through activated carbon).

3-stage sedimentation

Waste water from the toilet is then collected in a septic tank, where water is treated in three-stage sedimentation stages and passed through a reed bed filter, before being used for irrigating trees.

Says Sekar: "The solar panels last for 25 years and I got them installed at over Rs four lakh. On any given day, including rainy days, it can generate 12-15 units which is sufficient for most four-people households. Sun is more certain to come up each day than availability of grid power which is coal-based, nuclear and hydel. Last week when it rained, the water tank collected upto 30,000 litres. Till now, I used only 1,000 litres for the entire week."

Very soon, Sekar's family will relocate to the new house. Next on his agenda is adopting turbines to harness wind energy, but he says that procuring the machines is a tad difficult as very few companies in India sell them.

"If every household harvests rainwater, the City will be fully self-sufficient, with no need to divert water from faraway rivers," said Sekar, who is now designing waste water management and solar solutions for residential complexes and individual homes.

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