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Title: Need to promote off-grid solar power technology for providing electricity in rural parts of the country.

DR. SHASHI THAROOR (THIRUVANANTHAPURAM): The lack of connectivity of at least 75 million rural households in our country to the electricity grid is a matter of grave concern. With the abundant availability of sunlight in most parts of India, the rapid development and implementation of off-grid solar power technologies would accelerate the electrification of our villages without putting a strain on the environment and that too at a lesser cost. Research confirms that in remote areas, though initially the cost of off-grid solar is higher than electricity generated by fossil fuels, yet it is still cheaper than extending the grid. The National Solar Mission needs to do much more to provide better access to electricity. Government subsidies can ease the burden on rural households. I, therefore, urge the Government to promote off-grid power in rural areas and provide incentives for innovation because so many Indians are literally disconnected from modern India.