'Solar water pumps have huge potential in India'

As the Indian farmers hugely depend on underground water for irrigation their field, Solar pumps can be very useful, as their dependence on imported diesel can reduce substantially, write Anjali Godyal and Vikas Jha

Almost about 70 percent of India's population live in rural areas. Agriculture is the bedrock of Indian economy. Irrigation system in India is usually about huge projects that incur high capital expenditure. Hence, policies at the central and the state level are mostly tilted in favour of big projects.

With the increasing pace of globalization and growing environmental pollution, it has become imperative to develop innovative and cost-effective solutions, which help enhance yield and quality, yet address the aforementioned challenges. Renewable energies are fast establishing themselves as ideal solutions.

Solar water pumps have huge potential in India as they provide water for irrigation to villages at the micro level. The government and many not-for-profits organisations have been trying to pilot such initiatives in different parts of the country. The pilot of solar pumps by Sehgal Foundation in some locations of Bihar has brought out interesting facts. Solar pumps can be very useful in Bihar as most farms are not electrified and the farmers depend mostly on diesel water pumps, which is why Bihar Renewable Energy Development Agency has been trying to promote the use of solar pumps through schemes and subsidies.

NABARD also has a capital subsidy scheme for promoting solar photovoltaic water pumping system for irrigation where 40 percent subsidy is provided. The process
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