The Bangladesh Meteorological Department, under the Government of Bangladesh, also measures solar radiation and other related parameters. Out of 31 monitoring stations they are measuring solar radiation for only 7. RERC has developed correlation parameters to find out solar radiation for other positions based on other data like sunshine duration or cloud cover data.

To get all data for the entire country the Renewable Energy Research Center of Dhaka University is doing a project called SWERA (Solar and Wind Energy Resource Assessment) with the support of UNEP. Partners from various countries are involved in this project. This is one of the long-term projects in RERC. The project is preparing solar and wind energy resource maps over Bangladesh. They have one map using their own regular measured solar radiation data for 2002-2006 and from estimation using BMD.

What is SWERA? SWERA means (Solar and Wind Resource Assessment). The overall aim of SWERA is to bring sustainable energy approaches to developing countries through increased investment in renewable energy projects. The database and analytical tools developed through SWERA will help governments develop realistic energy policies and programmes that are based on sound knowledge of available renewable resources.

Countries involved in the SWERA effort include: Bangladesh, Brazil, China, Cuba, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guatemala, Honduras, Kenya, Nepal, Nicaragua, and Sri Lanka. Till now, this project has not been launched in Bangladesh. But its work has almost finished and it will be launched very soon.

SWERA is creating a global archive of information and a technical review service that can help developing countries evaluate their renewable energy resources.

When completed, the global archive will include existing wind energy resource data such as:

·Global ocean surface wind speeds (applicable to coastlines and small islands),

·High resolution maps from countries where previous mapping has been undertaken, and

·New wind maps in 5-7 regions.

Solar and wind energy information collected through SWERA will be assembled into widely usable CD-ROMS, and incorporated into a user-friendly Geographical Information System (GIS) tool.

In Bangladesh this CD-ROM will be given free of cost to users at the event of launching. There will also be a website where all data of the whole country will be provided. If anybody wants a get data for a particular area then he just has to click on that area on the map to get all the data for that place. It is just like a toolkit that can give reliable, accurate and easily accessible data. This is very important for installing a solar panel or windmill because it gives necessary data about the viability. SWERA is designed to give a number of outcomes including consistent, reliable, verifiable, accessible global data for international and local investors as well as other stakeholders.

Renewable energy is the ultimate solution for power crisis. It is also the technique to keep the environment clean by reducing Green House Gas. In spite of inadequate funding this center is trying its best to run parallel with other international research centers in this field.

Further, the centre is now researching about connecting the electricity collected from solar panels to the national grid. They are also conducting a feasibility research on this ground. If it can be done then they hope to reduce the power crisis.

Renewable research centre---

Has recently started a short course of one and a half month relating to renewable energy. Two batches have already finished the course. The centre wants to start a long course in this same area later.

Organizes an annual exhibition in the campus. In 2004 they held an exhibition in Bogra with help from LGED.

Every year the centre arranges a year ending seminar.

An Ex-Research Associate who supported me by giving information said that the Research Centre is doing projects and innovating new ideas but cannot implement them fully due to some drawbacks. The authorities are supporting them but more financial and technological support would enable them to implement new innovative projects more efficiently and effectively. Moreover, the Government's plan is that by the year 2020, 10% of total electricity will come from renewable resources. In Bangladesh the number of solar system installations is on the rise. Now Government and others can take an initiative to install a small solar panel manufacturing setup from ingot or wafers. It will reduce the price and one can sell those in foreign countries.

Biogas plants are now popular in rural areas. More steps can be taken to popularize the proved solar water heating system, solar cooker or solar dryer. It requires proper planning from Government and NGO level.

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