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Understanding solar power and its importance

That glowing ball of fire up in the sky, that we call the sun, is an unending provider of abundant radiant energy. This radiant energy, which is also known as solar energy, is constituted of electromagnetic waves. Man has always been in quest of newer forms of energy. Consequently, man has been able to invent some very effective means of capturing a part of this radiant energy through ingenious means, and convert it into various other useful forms of energy such as heat and electricity. This harnessed energy from the sun produces the solar power that we get to hear about these days. Solar power is widely being looked upon today as the most promising alternative source of power for the future. In fact, the subject of solar power can generate a lot of interest. This article will cover many of the essential aspects of solar power to help us better understand its true nature and realize its significance in the modern world.

Learning how solar power works

Just look around and you are sure to see solar power being used in a most diverse range of applications and ways everywhere around you. Solar power is being touted, and justifiably so, as the next big thing in energy production, along with wind power, hydro power and other such alternative energy sources. It therefore becomes tremendously important to find out more about solar power and how it can help us avoid an imminent energy crisis in the not-too-distant future. Sun's energy is transmitted through its rays which contain copious amounts of electromagnetic waves. Did you know that of the total amount of radiation received by the earth, about seventy percent actually gets absorbed by the earth's surface, water bodies and vegetation, while the rest is usually reflected back into space?

The radiation that is absorbed by the earth's surface is actually responsible for heating the atmosphere, generating what is known as radiant heat. In fact, solar radiation is directly responsible for about 99% of the usable flux of the renewable energy on earth. However, the actual scope and range of usage of solar power, along with how costly or cheap it would all be, depend primarily on the efficiency with which the incumbent radiation is utilized by the existent solar power technology.

Even though solar energy has various applications, its actual use is dictated by the specific requirement it aims to serve as well as by the various techniques used to capture and convert solar energy. Solar energy can be broadly divided into two categories depending on its usage and application - active solar energy and passive solar energy. Active solar energy uses sunlight to charge photovoltaic cells and solar panels that in turn produce various other forms of energy (mainly heat, electricity and mechanical energy). The way it works involves charging the solar cells with radiant energy and making the produce power that is used to run pumps and spin fans which,

in turn, produce other forms of energy for consumption by mankind. The use of passive solar energy involves using sunlight to guide the designing of buildings with well-lit and well-circulated spaces, citing a building optimally to the sun and so on.

Active or passive, no matter in what form it is used, the advantages of solar energy many. Today, there's not even a shadow of doubt regarding the immense potential of solar energy to replace conventional power and emerge, in its own right, as a completely viable and 100% sustainable alternative. Indeed, solar energy has touched upon many different aspects of our lives. Solar energy has found its use in a most diverse range of fields such as the domestic arena, corporate sector, urban planning and architecture, agriculture (including horticulture and greenhouse), solar lighting, solar heating, ventilation and cooling, disinfection and desalination, cooking, electricity and so on. Indeed, the importance and acceptance of solar energy in today's world is forever on the rise. However, one must also remember that solar energy has a few disadvantages as well. Let's take a look at them.

Here are some pluses and minuses of solar power

In order to understand solar power better and how it can help us, we must understand the various advantages and disadvantages of using it. To begin with, the chief advantage of using solar power, one that far outweighs whatever disadvantages it might have, is its clean and eco-friendly nature. Unlike conventional power plants, solar power production does not produce harmful byproducts, or releases harmful gases or pollutants into the atmosphere. It is also not dependent on the already dwindling reserves of our natural resources such as coal and petroleum. Moreover, the sun is a perennial source of energy, never to get depleted. No wonder, solar power is finding its ways into more and more areas of our lives with every passing day. However, speaking of disadvantages, it is worth remembering that solar power needs a steady and consistent supply of strong sunlight in order to be really effective. Some areas may not be able to receive this requisite amount of sunlight. Nonetheless, research is continuing in this field to overcome these hurdles and make solar power a more practical choice for everybody.

Solar power is the ideal choice for you if you seriously want to go 'green' and also save a lot of money on your electricity bills. The best thing about solar technology is that it can be realized with even the simplest of means. Building solar panels at home calls for some degree of familiarity with the subject. The Internet is a great place to find plenty of resources to get you started. However, your chances of succeeding with your project will improve manifold if you have a step-by-step guide. It is a great way of ensuring that there are no obstacles in the way and you get the best results.

Jim Martin is a researcher, inventor, home energy consultant and author of the #1 best-selling e-book, "Earth 4 Electricity- Renewable Energy Made Easy". Jim has written dozens of home energy related articles and has been featured in ezines and print magazines, as well as on hundreds of websites worldwide. To Learn More about Jim Martin's Unique Step By Step Solar and Wind Power System Visit: [Solar Power](#)

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