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## State to replicate rooftop solar power model in 5 more cities

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**Ahmedabad:** Gujarat has taken the lead in solar energy. Now, it is planning to generate 5MW energy each from rooftop solar panels in five other cities — Mehsana, Surat, Rajkot, Bhavnagar and Vadodara, said state energy and petroleum secretary DJ Pandian.

He was talking about the efforts made by the government in that sector at a conference on the future of solar energy in India on Monday which was organised jointly by the Centre for Science and Environment (CSE) New Delhi and Gujarat Energy Research and Management Institute (GERMI), Gandhinagar. There, experts discussed the country's solar energy scenario, the roadblocks it faced and the way ahead.

**Conference  
discusses  
impediments that  
prevent solar energy  
from taking off in a  
big way in the  
country**

Pandian also said that ITI students would be trained by GERMI in solar energy technology to ensure that there was adequate manpower to help maintain the rise in rooftop solar energy generators that the government

was eyeing. He added that it was even thinking of framing a separate policy on how to attract solar manufacturers across the state.

Talking about the need to accelerate the scaling up of renewable energy mini grids, CSE director general Sunita Narain said Gujarat was the Germany of India as far as its role in pushing down solar energy prices in the country was concerned.

"But challenges remain. The scaling-up of mini grids can happen when the unit cost of electricity can be minimised and the growing aspirational levels of the people are met," she said.

While lauding the rooftop solar energy project in the state and across the country, Narain expressed concern that the economic aspect of it had not been addressed properly.

AK Tripathi, director of the Jawaharlal Nehru National Solar Mission, said the falling tariff was an encouraging sign for solar energy. But he also expressed concern about policy and regulatory support for the sector and Phase II of the programme. "Funds for the programme also remain a concern as against a budget of Rs50,000 crore sought, Rs19,000 crore has been sanctioned," he said.