



Sep 10 2014 : The Times of India (Chennai)

Delhi homes consume the most power, state ranks third

Jayaraj Sivan

Chennai:

Study By City-Based Firm Says Share of Agriculture Needs to Go Up Substantially

Delhi is literally the power capital of India, followed by Goa, Tamil Nadu, Punjab, Haryana and Kerala in that order, going by the per capita domestic power consumption statistics for 2013-14 released by a research firm.

The national capital and the tourist paradise of Goa have, in fact, held the top two slots for some years, but Tamil Nadu has overtaken Punjab and Haryana to move to third place in 2013-14, according to a study on per capita consumption of power by Chennai-based researchcum-consulting firm Athena Infonomics India, founded by S Narayan, former economic adviser to the PM. Strangely, some of the more developed states, including Maharashtra, Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka, are ranked further down, indicating lower levels of electrification and wide disparities in affluence and consumption. The study seeks to analyze the link between domestic power consumption and quality of life.

It reveals that Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh, along with Odisha, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand and Assam, are far below the national average of 156 kWh (units)



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in per capita consumption.

Bihar is the worst at 43 units per individual per annum, only 7.5% of what an average resident in Delhi consumes. "It points to gaping holes in Nitish Kumar's claims of development," said retired civil servant M G Devasahayam, adviser to Athena on power issues.

15% rise in TN , P 4 Tamil Nadu may be struggling to meet its growing energy demand but the distribution of power to the domestic, industrial and commercial sectors is fairly well balanced.

Except in the agricultural sector, shows a study conducted by Chennai-based researchcum-consulting firm Athena Infonomics India, Tamil Nadu is above the national average in power distribution. In domestic consumption, while the national average is 25% of the total consumption, in Tamil Nadu, 27.3% of its grid power is consumed in houses. In agriculture, consumption in the state is only a tad below the national average of 20.8%, while in the industrial and commercial sectors, Tamil Nadu is better than the national average, says the study by Athena, founded by S Narayan, former economic adviser to the Prime Minister.

Power supply to the industrial sector in the state is 1.4 times the domestic supply and three times the commercial supply. "Unlike in many other states, where there is a huge imbalance among various sectors, Tamil Nadu is fairly well balanced," said former bureaucrat M G Devasahayam, advisor to Athena on power issues. In 11 states, the domestic share of supply is lower than the national average, 14 states are below the national average in agricultural sector and 13 states each are below the national average in industrial and commercial sectors.

Delhi tops the list, closely followed by Kerala, in share of allocation to the domestic and commercial segments.

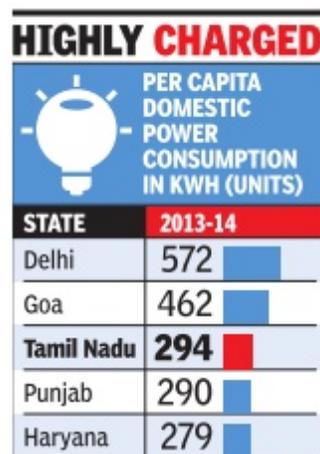
In states with fairly good irrigation systems and rivers like Kerala and Himachal Pradesh the agriculture sector is provided lesser power.

In Tamil Nadu, which depends on neighbouring states for water and where large swathes of land are dependent on groundwater for irrigation, the government ought to increase power allocation for agriculture, said a senior official. However, the government is hamstrung by the fact that power is given free to farmers and higher allocation means higher loss to the power utility. It is being compensated by the government in the form of subsidy.

Though domestic demand is on the rise in Tamil Nadu now, a Planning Commission study shows demand from industries will go up in the coming years, said Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) power analyst M Nandakumar. It will lead to further urbanization and higher demand from the domestic sector too. Agricultural sector alone may see some stagnation, he said.

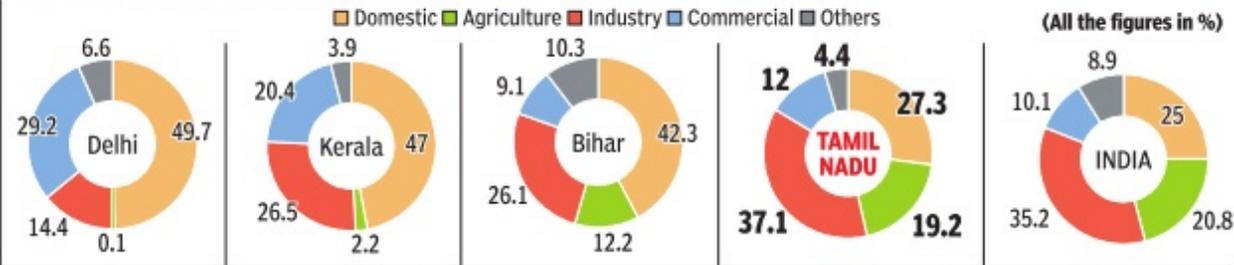
Industrial growth in the state has been slow in recent years owing to lack of power.

The state has been able to meet the current demand as six power projects were commissioned in the last one year. But to attract more investment, the state should have excess power, said Nandakumar.



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