

All you have to do is *switch off*

SAVE POWER A simple energy audit of your home can reduce your electricity bill in a matter of months

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In February, Jayesh Hasora, 43, did an energy audit of his Malad home. His monthly electricity bill for the IBHK home, equipped with a microwave, couple of TVs and air conditioners, was Rs2,500. Post the audit, he shows off his Rs2,050 bill to everyone in the neighbourhood.

"I realised where I was wasting electricity," said Hasora, who runs a manufacturing unit. "The energy auditors advised me on how to cut down on the wastage, and now look at my bill."

Simple things such as switching off computers and TVs instead of keeping them in standby mode, lighter coloured walls and adjusting AC temperatures, helped Hasora save Rs450. This could be your electricity bill too, if you follow a few simple measures (see box).



Energy inspectors stick red labels on switchboards of classrooms that do not switch off fans and lights when the class is empty.

SUDEEP MEHTA, who helped set up Maryites Unplugged

Of all the bills that reach our homes, the electricity bill is the most dreaded. With a cost of a unit of power for domestic purposes ranging from Rs3.50 to Rs10.50, electricity in Mumbai is costlier than many cities in the world. Businesses pay a lot more for power than homes. So, saving electricity should be a priority for many establishments and homes in the city. Currently, the city has a demand of 2,800 megawatts a day. Over the next five years, the demand is expected to grow beyond 4,000 megawatts, according to power distributors. Mumbai is the only place in the country to get the privilege of uninterrupted power supply. This privilege comes with the responsibility of energy conservation.

At St Mary's School in Mazgaon, members of Maryites Unplugged, which is not a band but an energy conservation club, walk around classrooms to check where lights and fans have been left switched on when there is no class. They stick red labels on the switchboard of the erring classroom. "At the end of the week we tabulate which classroom has the most red labels and that classroom cannot use their fans and lights for an entire day," said Sudeep Mehta, 20, a former student who helped set up the club.

The city's power distribution companies, Reliance Infrastructure and Tata Power, also set up energy conservation clubs in city schools. "Our students visit homes and talk about energy conservation. This attitude has to be inculcated when you are young," said Lalita Hariharan, principal of Rizvi Springfield School in Bandra, which has a Tata Mini Club Energi.

Companies, too, do their bit. Godrej, on an average, saves more than Rs2 crore worth of energy every year, which is equivalent to their one month's electricity bill. The company invests in any energy conservation device, which will pay for itself in less than 36 months through direct energy savings. "We have installed polycarbonate sheets, which are transparent. This eliminates the need for artificial lighting," said HN Daruwalla, business head, Godrej Electricals & Electronics. "As part of our corporate social responsibility programme, we have initiated a Greener India programme where we have set a target to reduce energy consumption by 30% and water consumption by 25% by 2020. We also want to eliminate hazardous wastes and rely on rainwater harvesting by then."

The Hindustan Unilever office in Andheri is a certified green building. "The spaces in the Andheri campus are designed in a way that they are filled with natural light. This helps optimal utilisation of electricity," said a spokesperson.