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IIT professor invents device called Radiation Shield, for those living close to cellphone towers, which reduces radiation levels in a room by at least 50 per cent

PIC: RAJU SHINDE

KUNAL GUHA

For those worried about the possible health hazards of radiation from cellphone towers after the flood of media reports on the issue, an IIT professor brings a small box of hope. Prof Girish Kumar from the Electrical Engineering Department at IIT Bombay has invented a device called 'Radiation Shield', which he says can absorb electro-magnetic radiation (transmitted from nearby cellphone towers) when placed anywhere in a room.

A study reported by this paper a couple of months ago measured dangerously high levels of electromagnetic radiation from cellphone towers at several key spots in the city.

Kumar's invention, that looks like a video cassette box standing vertically, is said to reduce radiation levels by at least 50 per cent when placed anywhere in the room. Kumar says, "People don't understand how cellphone radiation damages one's health. That's because one cannot see, feel or smell it and it is a slow killer."

Kumar's Radiation Shield is a passive device that has multiple antennas that absorb radiation from all directions and dump it into the load inside the unit. The frequency range that this device is capable of absorbing is between 800 megahertz and 4000 megahertz and has a tested efficiency of 90 per cent.

According to Kumar's study, people residing 50 metres from any cell tower are exposed to a million times stronger signal than required for normal cellphone usage. Kumar says, "Each cellphone tower is required to span an area of several kilometres, so the radiation blast is maximum within a 100-metre radius around each tower. People residing in this field unknowingly become potential victims of the radiation onslaught."

Countries like the United States and UK have regulation against having cell towers within 50 metres from any residential area. India presently has 1.5 lakh cellphone towers and another two lakh towers are planned in the next two years. And given the densely-populated metros here, it is easy to imagine how many people live within the deadly radiation zone.

Author of Broadband Microstrip Antennas, Kumar has been working in the field of antennas for the last 30 years. Kumar admits that he is not a medical professional and is not an expert on the biological effects of radiation. But the thermal aspect of radiation is entirely his sphere. He explains, "Radiation transmitted from cellphone towers is similar to that of microwave energy. So, just like a microwave first heats liquids in food items kept inside it, radiation is also attracted to liquids and the human body comprises 70 per cent liquid."

The thermal effects of radiation are

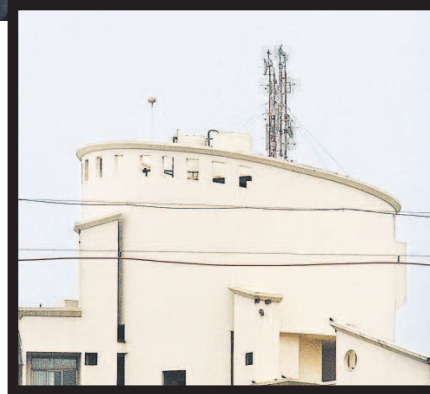


Prof Girish Kumar with the Radiation Shield. (Right) A cell phone tower on top of a building

said to be most pronounced in areas in the body that have stagnant liquids like eyes, arms, shoulders, thighs etc. And easy targets of this deadly wave would be children and pregnant women who have a higher volume of liquid in their body than others.

Kumar believes that two of his Radiation Shields when placed in a room of 150 square feet would effectively control the radiation level. Kumar plans to retail this device for Rs 1,449 and will extend a 5-year warranty with each piece.

For more details on the radiation shield go to <http://www.wilcom.co.in>



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