

## **History and Development of Biogas Technology in Nepal**

Biogas technology application in Nepal began in the mid-50s with the development of a micro-model digester (made of an oil drum) by Father B.R. Saubolle. Thereafter, some groups, through their own initiative, built a few biogas plants in the capital city, Kathmandu.

Genuine interest in biogas development came during the energy crisis in 1973, and the "Energy Research and Development Group" under Tribhuvan University was established in 1975. Biogas received further impetus during the Agricultural Year (1975/76) with a subsidised loan from the Agricultural Development Bank. As many as 196 of these plants were built by private contractors under the supervision of the Department of Agriculture. The design of biogas plants which are composed of floating steel drums for storage was directly transferred from India. Some private contractors and Development Consulting Services of the United Mission to Nepal popularised the plant at that time.

In 1977, Biogas and Agricultural Equipment Development (Pvt. Ltd.) was established as a specialised company by means of a joint investment from the Agricultural Development Bank, Nepal Fuel Corporation (Presently TCN), and the United Mission to Nepal. The company aims to establish service centres in strategic places in the country to construct and provide services for operation and maintenance, to train local manpower in the construction and maintenance of biogas plants, to provide support services to beneficiaries, to conduct problem-oriented research and development, and to make biogas accessories and appliances. However, the company attempts to cover all the areas feasible for biogas plant utilisation from its 17 offices. The biogas plants built by the company carry a five to six year guarantee for operation and maintenance. Since there is no separate grant aid from the Government for the extension, promotion, training, and R & D of biogas, these expenses are passed on to the farmers, resulting in the increased cost of biogas plants. The Water and Energy Commission under the Ministry of Water Resources has also been involved in biogas planning and development from the Seventh Five Year Plan onwards.