

Problems and Prospects: Issues for Discussion

1. The Government does not have a consistent policy for the promotion of biogas to meet energy needs. This is reflected in the ad hoc nature of its subsidy policy. Therefore, it is now high time that the Government made a firm policy commitment in this area, in particular, and towards the development of renewable energy resources, in general.
2. There is no specific department or ministry responsible for promoting the development of renewable energy resources. At present, several departments and ministries are engaged in promoting different energy technologies but their efforts are not coordinated rendering it hard to identify one institution to plan and implement renewable energy policies. Since activities are uncoordinated and isolated, there is no systematic future plan or direction. It is important to make a specific department in the government responsible for the development of renewable energy resources.
3. The initial installation cost of existing biogas designs is high and beyond the reach of the majority of rural families in Nepal. Research into more cost-effective designs is essential if biogas is to be accessible for poor households as well.
4. Low gas production during the winter months, particularly in the colder hilly regions, has been a constraint to the promotion of biogas in the hills and mountains. Research is needed into methods of maintaining higher temperatures in the digester pit, so that optimum gas production can be ensured throughout the year.
5. There is very little publicity, particularly of the audio-visual kind, and a better extension and dissemination programme is essential.
6. There is an insufficiency of trained manpower to build, supervise, and repair biogas digesters. Training at different levels is essential.
7. Construction materials such as cement, G.I. Pipes, biogas lamps, and other appliances are unavailable in some parts of the country. They are also difficult to transport to the remote hilly areas. Transportation subsidies will be necessary if biogas plant installation in inaccessible areas

is to be promoted. Here again, a definite government policy is needed to assess the amount of subsidy required.

8. Community biogas plant construction has not been successful in many places, but why it failed is unknown. Can such community biogas plants be promoted to enable poor householders, who cannot afford and maintain a small plant, to derive the benefits?
9. The Agricultural Development Bank has already taken a lead in the promotion of biogas. Other commercial banks should be encouraged to participate in the promotion of renewable energy resources.