

CASE A: A Popular Family Biogas Plant in Chitwan

In 1989, Ram Prasad Kafle, a resident of Swauli Bazaar in Bharatpur Municipality installed a 10m³ fixed dome design biogas plant with the technical assistance from the Biogas Company and financing from the ADB/N. He also received a 25 per cent subsidy on the capital investment through the ADB/N, and was assured of 50 per cent interest subsidies (7.5%) over several installments of credit repayment from six to seven years. But, because of the sudden withdrawal of interest by the Government in 1990/91 he did not receive the interest subsidy this year. Naturally, he was angry about the ad hoc manner in which the government policy was changed. Frequent changes in government policy are unlikely to instil confidence in the Government on the part of small farmers.

Mr. Kafle has seven members in his family and owns two buffaloes, including one in lactation. Prior to the establishment of the biogas plant, he used fuelwood for cooking and electricity for lighting. He used to buy fuelwood from street vendors, who collected firewood from the nearby forests. He estimated that his fuelwood requirement annually was equivalent to two full-grown sal wood trees. The nearby forest, as the time passed receded farther and farther away.

Mr. Kafle puts about 30kg of dung into the biogas digester every day. He has stall-fed his buffaloes so as not to lose the dung. He strongly recommends biogas plant owners to stall-feed their animals which could help them operate a biogas plant even with few animal heads.

Mr. Kafle has also attached a latrine to the biogas digester pit to enhance biogas production. He is, however, hesitant to speak openly about this to many of his orthodox friends and relatives, but he is quite comfortable about discussing this with outside visitors.

After installing the biogas plant, Mr. Kafle discontinued using fuelwood for cooking. The gas produced is sufficient for cooking the family meals. The slurry is used to prepare compost with the addition of refuse from the sheds, kitchen waste, and waste matter. Organic manure production has increased on his farm and its application on the vegetable garden has shown promising results. He described his experience with cauliflower seedlings; the application of slurry had improved the crop tremendously.

A satisfied biogas plant owner, Mr. Kafle strongly recommends his other farmer friends to install biogas plants and claims that a great deal of fuelwood saving can be accomplished through biogas if this

programme is spread throughout the country.

He also advocates the attachment of latrines to the digester pit. By doing so, one can save the cost of constructing soak pit and septic tank separately and enhance the production of gas as well as slurry.