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Biofuel: Potential and Prospects in Nepal as an Alternative to Fossil Fuels

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Abstract

Though a tenth of Nepal's energy requirement, especially in the urban sector, is met with petroleum products; the external dependence on it has caused irregularity in the supply and hampered economic growth of the country. Moreover; the dependence of more than 80% of Nepal's rural population on traditional biomass and/or fossil fuel for energy has always been the reason for health problems and has stopped them from moving out of their woe towards economic development. One of the ways to get rid of this external dependence and to improve the national economy is to find alternative,s and biofuel could be a better option to substitute fossil fuels as compared to other energy resources such as hydropower or solar energy that need expensive infrastructure and more time to develop. The abundance of resources such as molasses, plant species producing inedible oil, fat and resins could support the intervention of biofuel such as ethanol, biodiesel, un-esterified plant oil and turpentine in various applications ranging from urban vehicles to rural requirements of operating irrigation pumps, agro-processing mills, electric generators, cookers and lamps. Initiations for the use of biofuel started in Nepal long back with various action research activities by different sectors and this needs to be continued by developing infrastructures, building technical capacity of stakeholders and formulating policies that are favorable for harnessing energy from the abundantly available resources.

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