

From The Project Co-ordinator's Desk

In the last few months, the project has been able to motivate the village community in all the five clusters of the project area to go for dependable energy services using locally available biomass as raw material. Village Bio-energy Management Committees are envisaged to own and maintain the generation and supply of power. Village Forest Committees set up under Joint Forest Management guidelines of the Government are engaged in biomass development activity both on common as well as private land. It is also proposed to take over power distribution franchise from the power utility company by a village-level society so that the existing distribution infrastructure can be made use of. This will be a win-win situation for both the utility and the village community through reduction of T & D losses, supply of reliable, timely and quality power, and improved productivity. Whereas the utility will reduce its losses, the villagers can substantially improve their income levels. Bill payment is also likely to be much better due to community involvement and assured quality.

33 community biogas plants involving 119 households and 589 persons are now functional. This management model appears to be working well and has so far saved 228 tons of fuelwood. What is even more satisfying is the perceived enhancement in status of such families which now have clean kitchens with piped cooking gas. This fits in well with the concept of PURA (Providing Urban Amenities in Rural Areas), visualized by Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, President of India. Biomass saved here can be used in the gasifier with greater efficiency for generation of power.

The project is making all efforts to make use of locally available surplus biomass and also to increase the availability through tree planting on vacant land. There is also a lot of scope for demand side management. About 85% of the power consumed in a typical village is for pumping irrigation water. The villagers have voluntarily resolved to go for community micro-irrigation systems for high-value, low water-intensive crops. This may bring down water and power consumption by more than half. During the last summer, 5 groups of 38 farmers adopted this model successfully. Equity issues were addressed up-front while conserving ground water and reducing poverty. Now many more farmers are ready to adopt this system. To further incentivise conservation of water and hence of power, tariff is being fixed on volumetric basis for irrigation water. The enhanced income from irrigated agriculture will improve the capacity to pay.

Thus, the project is adopting an integrated approach in making the villages self-sufficient in desired energy services. It has also been recognized that sustained development as a goal is possible only with full community involvement.

The project is evolving a bioenergy technology package that would be financially, institutionally and ecologically sustainable and would also be replicable in an already electrified typical Indian village. The recent ratification of Kyoto Protocol by Russia has raised hopes of faster development of carbon market that would add to the financial viability of such technology and hence would attract entrepreneurs.

The project is developing partnerships with other organizations for spreading biomass energy technologies. We look forward to a day when these technologies can be standardized and disseminated in a wide scale. We are making all efforts in that direction.

SUBHASH C. KHUNTIA
Project Coordinator

PROJECT OBJECTIVES

A. Global Objective:

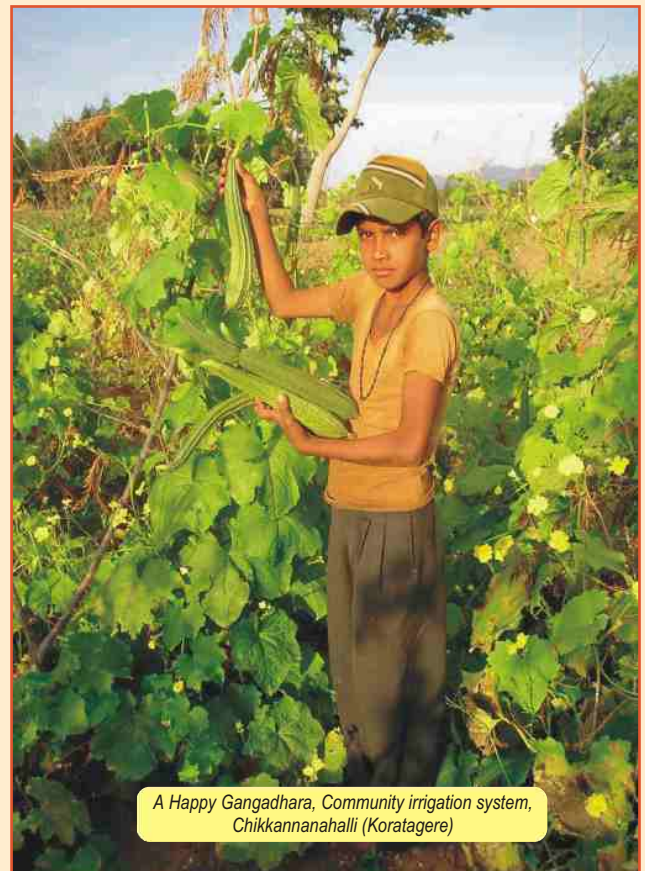
- To reduce Carbon dioxide emissions through promotion of bio-energy as a valuable and sustainable option to meet the rural energy service needs in India.

B. National Objective:

- To increase the share of renewables in the total energy generation
- To develop technical, institutional and financial mechanisms to overcome barriers for large scale adoption and commercialisation of bio-energy technology packages

C. Local Objectives:

- To develop and demonstrate a decentralized bioenergy technology package for providing quality rural energy services
 - **Basic services:** Lighting, pumping drinking water, cooking
 - **Economic activity:** Pumping irrigation water and agro-processing, flour mills.



A Happy Gangadhara, Community irrigation system, Chikkannanahalli (Koratagere)