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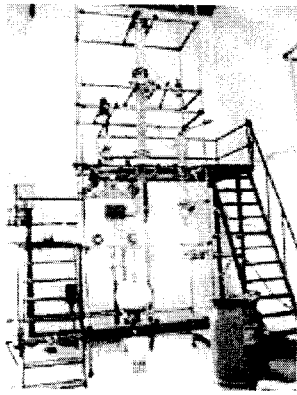
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## State's first bio-fuel plant uses jatropha seeds

**Bio-fuel made from Ratan-Jyot seeds is sold at Rs39 per litre and gives an average of 21 km per litre**

Rishi Banerji



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The soaring price of crude oil has again made people think over other source of energy generation. Gujarat has successfully found a way out, producing fuel from the seeds of Ratan-jyot (Jatropha Curcas) plant which serves the purpose of crude oil.

Navsari-based Aaditya Aromedic & Bio-energies Pvt. Ltd produces oil from Ratan-jyot (Jatropha) vanaspati seeds. The unit was started by Dharmendra Parekh and his four partners in 2005 by signing a MoU with state government to set up a unit at Tarsadi village in Navsari district.

"After 6 years of extensive research on bio-fuel production in 1992 at my home town in Bardoli I was successful in preparing refined usable fuel. In 2001, when the trail production was successful, I decided to setup a unit at Tarsadi," said Parekh, a partner & CMD of the company. The unit started its commercial production in May 2008 and currently it is producing 1000 litres of fuel daily.

Parekh is hopeful of capturing the market once people are aware of the advantages of bio-fuel. Bio fuel scores over petrol and diesel as it is less expensive. A litre of bio-fuel is available for Rs39 whereas the price of diesel and petrol is Rs 40 per litre and Rs54.18 per litre respectively.

The first bio-fuel delivery from the unit has received good response. "Our first oil tanker was delivered at Bardoli and until now we have received more than 40 inquiries from people who are interested in opening a bio-fuel pump in their area. We are planning to issue licenses on commercial basis at different parts of the state once our production increases," Parekh said.

Parekh and his partners have been using bio fuel in their vehicles since nine months. Vehicles plying on diesel or petrol give an average of 18-19 km per litre while vehicle running on bio-fuel gives an average of 21 km per litre. The fuel also reduces the problem of carbon deposits in engine and air pollution caused by it.

Rather than being a substitute, Jatropha has other benefits too. The fuel is a renewable source of energy and one single plant can produce seeds for 50-60 years in a row. Besides, if planted it also reduces soil erosion and its leaves can be used as insecticide for crops.

Most importantly, it generates income at rural belts where there are very limited source of employment. "Currently, 85 BPL families are cultivating Jatropha seeds in 2,000 hectares and are earning handsome income from it. Moreover, the plant also requires least care during its cultivation. Jatropha is a cash crop and one plant can easily produce 3-5 kilos of seeds per season," Parekh added.

After the success of the project, many scientist and business delegates from country and abroad visited Tarsadi village. Recently a delegation comprising officials from Science and Technology Department, China visited the village to study about the various facets about the project. Keeping Tarsadi as role model similar projects had also been initiated at Rajasthan, Maharashtra & Madhya Pradesh too.

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