



BIOGAS PRODUCTION FROM HOUSEHOLD KITCHEN WASTE FOR FARM USE

Dhivya C*, Arunkumar R, Jayashree V and Kamali S P

Research Scholar (Agricultural Extension Education), Dept. of Agricultural Extension and Rural Sociology, Tamil Nadu Agricultural University, Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu.

**Corresponding Author Mail ID: dhivya2908@gmail.com*

Introduction

Biogas is a renewable, clean-burning fuel primarily composed of methane (CH₄) and carbon dioxide (CO₂), produced through the anaerobic digestion of organic matter by microorganisms. With the increasing urban population, energy demands are rising, and conventional fossil fuel sources are depleting. In this context, renewable energy sources like biogas offer a sustainable alternative. Urban agriculture, which integrates food production into city planning, can greatly benefit from biogas, particularly when sourced from household kitchen waste. As urban households generate significant volumes of organic waste, a large portion of which ends up in landfills and contributes to greenhouse gas emissions, biogas technology provides a sustainable solution for energy generation and waste management while supporting eco-friendly farming practices.

Kitchen Waste as a Feedstock

Kitchen waste serves as an excellent feedstock for biogas production due to its high moisture and organic content. Common materials include vegetable peels, fruit rinds, leftover food, spoiled produce, and used tea leaves. These materials are rich in carbohydrates, proteins, and fats, which are crucial for microbial digestion. An ideal carbon-to-nitrogen (C:N) ratio of around 25–30:1 enhances biogas yield, while high moisture content (70–90%) facilitates microbial activity. For effective biogas generation, proper segregation of organic from inorganic waste is essential. Pre-treatment methods such as shredding, pulping, and homogenization help increase the surface area for microbial action and improve the overall digestion process.

Biogas Plant Designs Suitable for Urban Areas

Urban environments require compact, efficient, and low-maintenance biogas plant designs. Two commonly used models are the fixed dome and floating drum digesters. While fixed dome models are more durable and have fewer moving parts, floating drum systems provide visible gas storage but require regular maintenance. For space-constrained urban households, portable biogas digesters made from plastic or fiber-reinforced tanks offer a viable solution. These units are easy to install, require minimal space, and are ideal for small-scale kitchen waste processing. A comparison of these models shows variations in cost, space requirements, efficiency, and scalability, enabling urban users to choose the best option based on their specific needs.

Biogas Production Process

The biogas production process involves four major stages of anaerobic digestion: hydrolysis, acidogenesis, acetogenesis, and methanogenesis. In hydrolysis, complex organic matter is broken down into simpler compounds. Acidogenesis further degrades these into volatile fatty acids, which are then converted into acetic acid during acetogenesis. Finally, methanogenesis produces methane and carbon dioxide, the key components of biogas. Several factors influence the efficiency of this process, including temperature (optimal range 30–40°C for mesophilic digestion), pH levels (around 6.5–7.5), and hydraulic retention time (usually 20–30 days). On average, 1 kg of kitchen waste can yield 0.3–0.5 m³ of biogas per day, sufficient for cooking or small-scale farm energy needs.

Use of Biogas in Urban Agriculture

Biogas generated from household kitchen waste can be directly used in urban agriculture for various applications. It serves as a clean energy source for cooking and heating in greenhouses, especially during colder months. It can also be used to power small irrigation pumps, reducing reliance on electricity or diesel. Biogas systems can be integrated with hydroponic or aquaponic setups to provide both energy and nutrients. The by-product of digestion, known as digestate or biogas slurry, is a nutrient-rich organic fertilizer that can replace chemical fertilizers, improving soil health and supporting sustainable crop production.

Environmental and Economic Benefits

Adopting biogas from kitchen waste significantly reduces the burden on landfills and lowers methane emissions, a potent greenhouse gas. This approach aligns with the principles of a circular economy, where waste is converted into valuable resources like energy and fertilizer. Economically, households can save on cooking fuel and farm input costs. Urban farmers benefit from free or low-cost bio-fertilizers. Additionally, communities adopting biogas technologies may qualify for carbon credits under environmental programs, enhancing sustainability metrics and contributing to climate goals.

Challenges and Constraints

Despite its benefits, biogas production from household waste faces several challenges. Space limitations in urban homes can make installation of digesters difficult. Public awareness about waste segregation and the operational aspects of biogas systems remains low. Initial setup costs and occasional maintenance needs can deter adoption. Concerns over odor, pest attraction, and safety, especially with poor-quality digesters, also act as barriers. Overcoming these challenges requires effective awareness programs, design innovations, and supportive policy measures.

Policy Support and Government Schemes

The Government of India has introduced several schemes to promote biogas adoption, including the Sustainable Alternative Towards

Affordable Transportation (SATAT) initiative, which encourages compressed biogas production. Urban local bodies often provide support for setting up small-scale biogas plants through subsidies and technical assistance. Additionally, government programs promote clean energy, urban waste management, and decentralized renewable energy generation, creating a favorable policy environment for household biogas systems.

Case Studies and Success Stories

Several successful models of biogas use from kitchen waste exist across India. In Kerala and Maharashtra, community kitchens have implemented biogas systems that handle several tons of waste daily, supplying cooking gas for large-scale meal preparation. In Bengaluru, urban farms powered by household biogas units use the gas for heating and the digestate for vegetable cultivation. Startups like GreenJoules and NGOs like SustainEarth are promoting compact biogas technologies for urban households, bridging the gap between innovation and community adoption.

Future Prospects and Innovations

Looking ahead, innovations in smart biogas systems, including IoT-based monitoring for gas levels and digestate quality, are making household digesters more user-friendly. Integration with vertical and rooftop farming systems offers a closed-loop model for food and energy production in cities. Urban farming clusters can adopt centralized biogas units fed by community waste, creating cooperative sustainability models. Moreover, biogas offers opportunities for entrepreneurship, education, and green job creation, especially in environmentally conscious urban centers.