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Poultry farmer turns litter into light



In the poultry hub of Namakkal in Tamil Nadu, almost every farmer owns at least 2,000 birds, grown for egg and meat, but none would take a second look at their droppings though, as an entrepreneur among them says, the litter “holds the key” to electricity generation.

First of its kind

“If the total poultry litter in the district is collected daily [6,000 tonnes] and processed, nearly 16 MW of power an hour can be generated, with 1,000 tonnes of manure and 10,000 litres of liquid biofertilizer as by-products,” says Salai Sivaprakasam, executive director of Subhashree Bioenergies (P) Ltd.

The plant, built on 60 acres at Goundampalayam, Tiruchengode, is touted as the country’s first power project that extracts energy from poultry excrement. It started with a capacity of 2.5 MW, later scaled up to 3.76 MW.

The bird muck is collected daily from several places and brought to the factory, where it is fed into a processing unit. It emits methane gas that is converted into electricity with a patented technology. The slurry, generated as residue, is sold as manure and liquid bio-applications to farmers.

At a time when Tamil Nadu is reeling under severe power shortage, “continuous generation is not that big a problem. It is easy, and we have been doing it since 2006,” says Mr. Sivaprakasam.

The plant has been recognised by the Union Ministry of New and Renewable Energy as a demonstration project for sustainable clean energy.

The entire plant, save the engines, is indigenous and is one among the 11 projects worldwide approved by the United Nations Development Programme. It has also been declared a Clean Development Project under the Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, says Mr. Sivaprakasam.

So far around 54 lakh units (kW) of power, worth Rs. 2 crore, has been generated and sold to the government, with 10 per cent reserved for the company.

“The company has also got approval from the Union government under the Clean Development Mechanism (a Kyoto Protocol component) since the plant helps to trap greenhouse gases that would otherwise be emitted by the litter left in the open, says Mr. Sivaprakasam.

For More Details Contact

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A cheap source in Tamil Nadu, which is plagued by power shortage