

Solar cooking in India

In India, box-type solar cookers are being promoted by the government by offering subsidies. At the end of March 1998, about 451,000 solar cookers were sold. But statistics indicate that solar cookers lag far behind biogas plants (2.674 million) as well as improved chullas (26.498 million). Some of the factors contributing to the slow progress of solar cookers include:

- For most Indians, cooking and eating are private affairs. Nobody wants to stand in the hot sun to cook food in the open.
- There is no provision for frying in the box-type cookers. Normally, no meal is served in South India without fried items.
- Nobody wants to use two cooking systems, one for frying and another for boiling.

Though cost-effective and reliable solar cookers with heat storage are available in Australia and Sweden, the prohibitive cost of such units make it unviable in India. *Contact: Dr. A. Jagadeesh, 2/210, 1st Floor, Nawabpet, Nellore 524 002, Andhra Pradesh, India. E-mail: a_jagadeesh@yahoo.com.*

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