Chapter 5

Recommendations

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The selection of the best energy mix for a community should be aimed at maximising the social benefits from that mix.

While increased use of renewable energy (RE) in an energy mix may be good for achieving various socioeconomic and environmental benefits, its production and use beyond a certain point may be counterproductive—from a social point of view.

For example, the production of solar energy and biomass energy is beneficial on many fronts as it can generate clean energy for off-grid areas. But if a multi-crop agriculturally productive land is used for the installation of solar systems or for growing biofuel crops, it will create several social problems, such as rendering farmers unemployed and reducing land used for food and fodder crops.

Thus, the choice of RE and its share in total energy mix for a particular country, region, or community needs *a priori,* careful, and detailed analysis so that the energy mix that is sustainable in the long run can be identified for the specific country and locality.

The social indicators for selecting the best mix of energy may also be site-specific. For example, in comparatively prosperous areas, energy availability and accessibility could be the key criteria; in other areas, such as comparatively economically weak areas, energy affordability will be the main criterion.

Selecting the right energy mix should also take into account some post-project impacts, which include the number of jobs created and continuity of those jobs, income generation for local citizens, migration due to employment generation, skills development amongst the local residents, and increased interaction amongst community members.