

India debates new ways to make biofuels as sustainability threats rise

The main advantages of biofuels over conventional fossil fuels is that the world is unlikely to deplete its sources of biofuels, as they are renewable. In addition, most biofuels have lower greenhouse gas emissions than fossil fuels. For many countries such as India, domestic biofuel production can reduce the consumption of imported fossil fuels, which provides economic gains, in addition to shielding against supply disruptions and fuel price fluctuations. Despite these advantages, the [environmental sustainability of biofuel](#) production due to its negative effects on food security and land-use changes, remains unclear.

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[Promit] Mookherjee says that these targets can have very serious effects on food security and the agricultural sector. "On one hand, it may benefit farmers who will have a ready market for their crops and receive higher prices for their products, but on the other hand, it could also lead to massive land-use changes that could negate the carbon reduction achieved by switching to biofuels."

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India needs to develop alternative feedstocks for biodiesel production. There are 11 Indian tree species that have been identified as having [high oil-content seeds](#); these need to be investigated for their feasibility in biodiesel production. In addition, India produces around three million tonnes of used cooking oil, which could be an important feedstock for biodiesel production.

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