

# M9 energy types discussion traditional energy paper

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## **M9 Energy Types Discussion/Traditional Energy Paper**

Energy Types Energy Types Traditional energy sources are the main sources of energy for heating, cooling and producing light in most homes especially in the rural areas. Biomass fuels such as dung, agricultural residues, wood and charcoal account for about 90 percent of rural energy consumption especially for most domestic energy needs (Parikh, 2011). The use of these energy sources involves high levels of physical activity including collection of wood from forests and transportation for long distances with women playing the greatest role in all these activities. As a result, women and other people living within these homes suffer from several health hazards at the various stages of acquiring these fuels. One of the health impacts associated with the use of these fuels involves the exposure to smoke released from the burning fuels. Studies have shown that people exposed to indoor smoke from the traditional fuels have a greater risk of suffering from respiratory diseases such as chronic bronchitis or emphysema, compared to people using clean fuels such as electricity for the various domestic energy needs (Parikh, 2011). Smoke from the traditional fuels is likely to exacerbate diseases such as asthma, and chronic bronchitis whose occurrence is significantly influenced by air pollution. Such diseases are likely increase in prevalence with continued use of these fuels and therefore, public health systems should focus on educating people on the need to invest in clean energy sources as well as support the introduction of new innovations capable of reducing the health risks associated with the use of traditional fuels. In addition, biomass fuels impact negatively the ecosystem through pollution involving increased release of carbon dioxide as well as formation of smog.

Coal Energy Coal has been used in different parts of the world since introduction of ways of using coal as a source of energy in the eighteenth century. During the Industrial Revolution, coal was burned to generate steam, which was used to power machines such as steam engines used in factories, steamboats, and locomotives (Thomas, 2007). Several inventions have taken place in regard to the use of coal energy including invention of the internal combustion engine capable of using coal instead of oil. Coal is hard, brown or black substance which burns with a yellow flame leaving ash behind. Coal has been associated with numerous advantages over other forms of fuels including availability in most industrialized countries, easy to mine using non-sophisticated technology, safe and easy storage and efficient conversion into energy. However, coal energy presents several disadvantages as a source of energy including the release of greenhouse gases and extreme heat from its combustion, release of toxic substances into the atmosphere, its non-renewable nature, physical negative impact on the environments, including large excavations and destruction of natural habits and health concerns faced by people involved coal mining (Thomas, 2007).

**Pro and Cons of Coal Energy as a Traditional Source of Energy**

**Pros**

Cheap and plentiful in different parts of the world. Large deposits lasting for a several decades

**Cons**

Non-renewable. Safe and easy storage. Coal does not pose any threat in its natural form

A major source of greenhouse gases and heat that contribute to global warming. Combustion of coal releases a lot of heat together with greenhouse gases, thus contributing to the problem of global warming currently experienced in almost every part of the world (Thomas, 2007). Limited technology required to mine and convert

into energy Bulky in terms of load making its transportation extremely expensive Easily converted into different energy products including electricity, gaseous, powdered and liquid coal products Limited in its use by the need for specifically designed engines for coal energy use. Easily converted into energy or useful fuel Forms a major source of air pollutants including green house gas, sulfur dioxide and carbon dioxide. Contributes to the occurrence of acid rain which damages vegetation. Available in large deposits Mining of coal from such deposits results in destruction of natural habitats, vegetations and useless land excavations. Coal has been associated with significant health concerns including chronic respiratory diseases such as chronic bronchitis and asthma among other conditions associated with air pollution (Thomas, 2007). Burning coal releases dangerous toxins that may have adverse effects not only on those involved in its mining but also the people living near coal mining areas. Coal mining has also been associated with deadly accidents particularly resulting from cave-ins that lead to abrupt loss of human lives (Thomas, 2007). People operating coal-dependent engines may also suffer from health conditions associated with the extreme heat released from burning coal such as skin conditions. In summary, coal as a traditional source of energy offers some benefits including access to cheap and easily available energy, reduction in dependability on other forms of energy. However, coal energy presents numerous negative impacts on the environment and health including release of greenhouse gases and other toxic substances into the atmosphere. Pollutants such as carbon dioxide and sulfur dioxide, and other particles have been associated with health conditions such as chronic bronchitis and

asthma among other respiratory complications. Therefore, the use of coal as a source of energy must involve public health systems to minimize its negative health impact. References Parikh, J. (2011). Hardships and health impacts on women due to traditional cooking fuels: A case study of Himachal Pradesh, India. *Energy Policy*, 39, 7587-7594. Thomas, I. (2007). *The pros and cons of biomass power*. New York, NY: The Rosen Publishing Group.