

Experts Speak

‘RISING’ INDIA’S ENERGY MIX

Concept Note

India’s energy consumption is projected to grow 4.2% a year by 2035, “the fastest among all the major economies” in the world, according to *BP Energy Outlook*. India, Asia’s second largest energy consumer since 2008, had overtaken Japan in 2015 as the world’s third largest oil consuming country after the US and China. It is expected that India’s consumption of fossil fuels will grow to be the highest by 2035 and it will overtake China as the largest growth market for energy in terms of volume by 2030. Meanwhile, as per the Ministry of Power (GoI), the installed capacity of energy in the country is 329,226 MW indicating a huge gap in the demand and supply which in turn, results in voluminous imports of energy resources that further burdens the national exchequer. When India is aspiring to become an influential global player with sustained economic growth,



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a judicious national energy mix plan is an imperative. Therefore, a pertinent question is, what should be India's energy mix be given the current domestic status of demand and supply, and other geopolitical undercurrents?

Energy systems in India have evolved over the last six decades along with the country's economic development, supporting the aspiration of nearly 1.2 billion people, within the framework of democratic polity, globally integrated economy and an environmentally sensitive regime. Ever since India pursued the reformed development agenda since 1991, significant effort has gone in to improving energy availability, as support to the country's developmental initiatives. The ever increasing demand for energy has posed tremendous pressure on its limited resources and has necessitated the implementation of a program for optimum usage. A synergy has to be achieved between economic growth rate of over seven per cent and environmental justice which warrants the investment in cleaner, greener technologies, global best practices and research and innovation of sustainable energy solutions. While nuclear energy is a viable option, the energy basket has to be diversified. Given the global climate change concerns, a new approach for energy and environment-friendly efficient industrialisation is the need of the hour.

The journal of *Liberal Studies* invited eminent scholars of the country to ponder over India's energy requirements and the strategy it must adopt and adhere to, to maintain a balance between its growth aspirations while simultaneously remaining a responsible stakeholder in the global climate change discourse. **Manpreet Sethi** opines that every potential source of electricity generation should be optimally used and the menu of options be varied so as to minimise risks of disruption. Meanwhile, India has a strong case for exploiting and expanding the role of nuclear energy in its future electricity mix for obvious reasons. **Dhanasree Jairam**, taking into account the global concerns for climate change, argues for India to thrust towards renewables through pro-active climate diplomacy. **Manish Vaid**, on the other hand, highlights the greater role of natural gas in the energy transition which can go beyond just being a bridge fuel to clean energy for a sustainable future.