

Past-Present-Future of Compressed Bio Gas Industry, with action plan



[Shashi Hegde](#)

Director at Hycons® Bioenergy, CBG BioCNG

[31 articles](#) Following

August 19, 2023

The past

The real journey of Compressed Biogas started in 2018 with SATAT coming into the picture. Many adventurous entrepreneurs have established CBG as industrial fuel much before the government oil marketing companies decided to hand hold.

The Present

With 2 years gone without much activity due to Covid related calamity, we are seeing a sharp raise in activity. To our surprise the government machinery is moving faster than the public in this case of sustainable energy.

Baggage of minor mistakes of the past..

..is truly haunting. I have no hesitation to say that the greed of quick money by few has created an obstacle in the CBG sector. This is how it happened to be precise, I was watching it happen, but was not yet participating actively, as we were hell bent to go for a thorough research and development of processes before venturing and preaching to others.

When the [#SATAT](#) was launched, few eager companies from consulting & construction took a complete opportunity to take the full advantage. Prior to SATAT (and even now) there was Deenbandhu and KVIC Biogas, and they were pretty successful. Only thing was it was for a domestic consumption with no real target for either input raw material (and that was only cow dung) or the output, people were okay with it as they treated biogas is a free supply to cook 3 times a day, when there is a shortage they always had firewood to fall back on.

What went wrong is due to deliberate or miscalculated sales pitch, some group of people went ahead to the early customers showing domestic small biogas plants as their credibility count.

Early movers to the CBG industry believed in those huge numbers of plants (of Deenbandhu KVIC models) & accepted as experience. Few knew it and others thought that Biogas would anyway come out, purification and compression machinery is available off the shelf. So joining them together would make the BioCNG out of raw biogas. Precisely we went off the track on that day.

Even today if you read any article for 2017-2021 you will find people writing based on input raw material quantity with no mention of the output.

The net result we got was, Unpaid loans in banks, sub-standard quality of projects, moisture in CBG...on top of this the trust deficit among the entrepreneurs & banks. The fence sitters could get a good amount of material to spread negative.

One more set of misjudgments came from the Government and Oil marketing companies side. As they were pushed to go fast, they had no choices in hand. They rolled out the entire [#SATAT](#) across India, without a pilot. *(and the current govt likes that way take [#GST](#), [#MCA](#) portal, big initiative without pilot, have a good intention but mess up to correct it later)*

The Future

- Some immediate action is required from all the technology providers and consultants, we have messed up, (those who have not quietly left the place) we have to clean up.
- Bring out a standardised model not on capital cost, every design can have a different approach and life, but the production cost has to come within a fixed bracket.
- Standardise the design, keeping the independent innovations aside, the process flow and the list of major machineries cannot change. Let us set up a proper project with no exclusions. Keep those flare, odorising etc things part of the project.
- Follow the IS standard IS 7285 or ISO 20675:2018, let us get rid of damn [#jugaad](#), which can put the customers in dire safety, quality & financial risk.
- Use PESO, ATEX approved high pressure parts or if at all using something which is not officially approved, we should at least use those compliant and tested to those global good practices.
- MoPNG & Oil marketing companies should land on the real ground, realise reality & release validated blocks for CBG plants. All across India it is not yet possible, where you can sell, talk about only those.
- Entrepreneurs, there is no meaning in waiting, This was a golden opportunity given by the Government for smaller entrepreneurs to participate and create wealth. There is a clear indication that such an opportunity is going away from your hands. Large corporations have ventured in now with a good amount of foreign funds now. Those who are waiting for the Indian Banking system to wake up, you will keep doing it. Take all our effort to collaborate with foreign capital at whatever terms. We, being from Bangalore know that, no lucrative and high potential industry gets funded by the Indian banking system. They are still stuck with steel and coal. Bangalore became a global IT hub not by Indian money, except for salary accounts, our banks have no stake. CBG also will see an exact replica.

[Shashi Hegde](#) is a director at [Hycons®](#), a Agribiomass, Napier Grass to Compressed bio gas technology provider. The views are personal, but expressed for public consumption !