

Essay on What Other Alternatives Are There to Oil for Our Energy-Hungry World?

At present oil or fossil, fuel is the most important source of energy in the world. We use it in various forms for our motor vehicles, to generate electricity and to run a host of other man-made machines. Without oil, the world would virtually come to a standstill.

Oil, despite its versatility, pollutes the environment no matter how careful we handle it. Also, oil is found only in certain areas around the globe. Thus it is often used as a political weapon by oil-producers to make the rest of the world submit to their demands. Finally, oil is a non-renewable source of energy. We will run out of it eventually.

This state of affair then necessitates the world to look for other sources of energy that are non-polluting, renewable and also not subject to the whims and fancies of politicians.

Sunlight or energy, from the sun, seems to be a possible alternative. At present, much research is being carried out to find more efficient ways of harnessing the sun's energy. Some of us may even have solar heaters installed in our homes. These devices cut down the need for electricity to heat water. Also, they do not pollute the environment. Perhaps even better solar heaters may be produced in the future that can serve the needs of entire communities, not just a few people who can afford them.

Hydro-electric plants are not as attractive as they appeared to be before. The main drawback to this form of energy production is that a hydro-electric plant needs a dam. Natural darns are few and far in between. Man-made dams alter the eco-system so much that it is better that they are not constructed. Our environment is more precious than

a few megawatts of electricity.

Nuclear energy is definitely not suitable. Nuclear reactors produce too many toxic wastes that the plants do not really know how to get rid of. Dumping them in the sea or burying them deep in the earth are not real solutions, for these wastes remain toxic for centuries. Also, the meltdowns that occurred at Chernobyl and Three-mile Island indicate how dangerous nuclear plants can be.

There is talk of nuclear fusion reactors where virtually no waste is produced. Such things have to be handled with extreme care for we do not know the consequences. Just a few decades ago, the world extolled the use of nuclear reactors that we dread now.

There are various other sources of energy but so far none prove to be economically viable. Anyhow, the world has to come up with suitable substitutes for oil. otherwise, in the not too distant future, we may undergo a very bad energy crisis that may threaten the whole structure of the world.