

On Gandhi Jayanti, OMCs launch 1000 Van Movement in 100 cities across the country for creating mass awareness on Repurpose Used Cooking Oil (RUCO)

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E-Paper

To spread awareness about the ill-effects of reusing cooking oil, a mass awareness campaign on RUCO (Repurpose Used Cooking Oil) is being undertaken by the Oil Marketing Companies, under the aegis of Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas (MoP&NG). The event is being flagged off at New Delhi and 100 more cities today i.e. 2nd October 2019 to mark the 150th birth anniversary of Father of Nation, Mahatma Gandhi.

In each of the cities, LPG delivery vehicles are being deployed to spread awareness amongst consumers, households, and Food Business Operators (FBOs) to create a movement towards a healthier India.

The practice of reheating cooking oil or using the same cooking oil for frying is common. Cooking oil is often repeatedly used by topping it up with fresh oil. Generally, big food businesses involved in the manufacturing of fried foods dispose of their used cooking oil (UCO) for industrial purposes (soap manufacture, etc.) but sometimes it finds way to small food vendors at cheap prices. At household level or by road-side vendors, the UCO is discarded in an environmentally hazardous manner blocking the sewerage and drainage systems. Therefore, in order to safeguard public health, FSSAI has notified the limit of Total Polar compounds (TPC) to be not more than 25% beyond which the oil is unsafe for human consumption. Higher level of TPC in cooking oil leads to health issues like hypertension, atherosclerosis, Alzheimer's and liver diseases. One of the studies also noticed high levels of glucose, creatinine and cholesterol with declined levels of protein and albumin in re-used cooking oil.

As used cooking oil is considered the most reasonable feedstock for biodiesel production, it is planned to redirect the used cooking oil from the food business operators for production of Bio-diesel. The benefits of converting UCO to biodiesel are Health Benefits, Cleaner Environment, Reduce Import Dependency and Infrastructural Investment in Rural Areas

Biodiesel:

Biodiesel is a liquid bio-fuel obtained, from biological sources viz. plant origin and animal origin, by chemically processing from vegetable oils or animal fats and an alcohol that can be used in diesel engines, alone or blended with diesel oil. Biodiesel is made through a chemical process called trans-etherification whereby the glycerine is separated from the fat or vegetable oil. The process leaves behind two products – methyl esters (the chemical name for Biodiesel) and glycerine (a valuable by product usually sold to be used in soaps and other products).

Biodiesel can help combating issue of used cooking oil: Biodiesel is an environment friendly option that can be help in solving the issue of food waste especially used cooking oil. If produced domestically with natural resources, its use decreases our dependence on imported fuel and contributes to our own economy. Biodiesel opens a great entrepreneurship opportunity and employment in the country. Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has said that "social entrepreneurs can benefit from Swachh Bharat programme as it has huge business element, while stressing on the need to convert waste into wealth. He has said that waste to wealth is a belief that is gaining momentum. If we consider waste as waste, then we have lost our precious possession." Government bodies, oil industry and biodiesel associations would collaborate to plan a strategy to collect used cooking oil and convert it into an environment friendly resource.

Tips for consumer Awareness

- Do not re-heat cooking oil. Consumption of used cooking oil leads to several health problems.
- Choose good quality frying oil (oil having high saturated and monounsaturated fatty acids are good for frying).
- It is ideal to use oil once for frying. Used oil should not be stored for longer time as the rate of deterioration is higher than the unused oil.
- Fry at the lowest frying temperature consistent with producing a fried product of good quality. The perfect temperature for frying would be that lowest temperature when the product comes up on the surface of the oil once the batter is dropped into the frying oil. The oil should not reach its smoke point. (The smoke point of an oil or fat is the temperature at which it gives off smoke).
- Remove the food particles from the oil while frying before the particles turn black.
- Use fryer or utensils made of good material for frying. Stainless Steel is the ideal material to use. Avoid iron pans as it accelerates oxidation resulting in rancidity.