

Utilization of Karanja (*Pongamia pinnata*) as a Major Raw Material for the Production of Biodiesel

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Received on 29. 06. 2011. Accepted for Publication on 19. 03. 2012.

Abstract

An experimental process for the production of biodiesel using karanja (*Pongamia pinnata*) seeds as a raw material has been studied. This process involved transesterification of karanja oil with methanol in the presence of a catalyst (NaOH), to yield biodiesel as the main product and glycerin as by-product. In this research work, free fatty acid (FFA) of Karanja oil was determined and it was found less than 5%. As a result, one step transesterification was carried out. Oil to methanol molar ratio (6:1 to 12:1), variation (0.5% to 1.6% wt of oil) of Catalyst (NaOH) concentration was determined. Base-catalyzed transesterification converted karanja oil into biodiesel and glycerol using 1% NaOH as alkaline catalyst at 60-65°C. This study revealed the maximum yield of biodiesel up to 85% with methanol to oil ratio 1:9 and for 1.5 hr reaction at 65°C. Co-ignition of biodiesel with commercial diesel was also evaluated and it was found that diesel engine run smoothly in the ratio of commercial diesel to biodiesel was 7:3.

Key words: Biodiesel, Karanja oil, Transesterification, Glycerin, Engine performance.

I. Introduction

Biodiesel has become more attractive recently because of its environmental benefits and the fact that it is made from renewable resources [1]. The American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM) defines biodiesel fuel as mono alkyl esters of long chain fatty acids derived from a renewable lipid feedstock, such as vegetable oil or animal fat. "Bio" represents its renewable and biological source in contrast to traditional petroleum-based diesel fuel; "diesel" refers to its use in diesel engines. As an alternative fuel, biodiesel can be used in neat form or mixed with petroleum-based diesel. Biodiesel, as an alternative fuel, has many merits. It is derived from a renewable, domestic resource, thereby relieving reliance on petroleum fuel imports. It is biodegradable and non-toxic. Compared to petroleum-based diesel, biodiesel has a more favorable combustion emission profile, such as low emissions of carbon monoxide, particulate matter and unburned hydrocarbons. Carbon dioxide produced by combustion of biodiesel can be recycled by photosynthesis, thereby minimizing the impact of biodiesel combustion on the greenhouse effect [3][9]. Biodiesel has a relatively high flash point (150°C), which makes it less volatile and safer to transport or handle than petroleum diesel [10]. It provides lubricating properties that can reduce engine wear and extend engine life [16]. In brief, these merits of biodiesel make it a good alternative to petroleum based fuel and have led to its use in many countries, especially in environmentally sensitive

areas. The most common way to produce biodiesel is transesterification [4][5], which refers to a catalyzed chemical reaction involving vegetable oil and an alcohol to yield fatty acid alkyl esters (i.e., biodiesel) and glycerol. Triacylglycerols (triglycerides), as the main component of vegetable oil, consist of three long chain fatty acids esterified to a glycerol backbone. When triacylglycerols react with an alcohol (e.g., methanol), the three fatty acid chains are released from the glycerol skeleton and combine with the alcohol to yield fatty acid alkyl esters [7][8]. Glycerol is produced as a by-product. Methanol is the most commonly used alcohol because of its low cost and is the alcohol of choice in the processes developed in this study. In general, a large excess of methanol is used to shift the equilibrium far to the right. Transesterification reactions can be alkali-catalyzed, acid-catalyzed or enzyme-catalyzed. The first two types have received the greatest attention and are the focus of this article. As for the enzyme-catalyzed system, it requires a much longer reaction time than the other two systems [12][17]. To date it has only been carried out on the laboratory scale and therefore will not be further discussed herein. At present, the high cost of biodiesel is the major obstacle to its commercialization. Biodiesel usually costs over US\$0.5/l, compared to US\$0.35/l for petroleum based diesel [13]. It is reported that the high cost of biodiesel is mainly due to the cost of virgin vegetable oil [10][6]. Exploring ways to reduce the high cost of biodiesel is of much interest in recent biodiesel research, especially for those methods concentrating on minimizing the raw material cost. The use of non edible karanja seed oil instead of virgin

oil to produce biodiesel is an effective way to reduce the raw material cost because it is estimated to be about half the price of virgin oil [15]. In addition, using waste non edible seeds could also help to solve the problem of waste seeds disposal [18]. Most current biodiesel research concentrates on the alkali-catalyzed technology carried out on a bench scale and no detailed technological information is available on overall continuous industrial processes in which both reactor and downstream separation units are continuously operated. Information on industrial process simulation and design is also unavailable. Apart from the transesterification reaction, the actual process of biodiesel production includes many process steps from raw material refining to product separation and purification. Evaluating the technological and economic feasibility of a biodiesel plant involves all operating units, not only one reactor. So there is a need to design a complete continuous process and assess its performance from the viewpoint of an entire plant. Therefore, an experimental study on biodiesel production from karanja (*Pongamia pinnata*) oil was undertaken.

II. Experimental

Materials: Karanja (*Pongamia pinnata*) seeds was used as raw material to produce biodiesel. Seeds was collected from rural area of the country. Methanol (CH₃OH) was used in the trans-esterification reaction which was 98%pure. NaOH and H₂SO₄ were used as catalyst which was purchased from local market.

Some other reagents such as iso-propanol, NaOH solution, titration solvent (Toluene+Iso-propanol), bromine water, barium chloride, HCl, were used for the production and analysis of biodiesel.

Methods: Collected karanja seeds was primarily grinded. The oil was extracted from Karanja seeds by solvent extraction method and yield of oil was obtained about 40%. Free fatty acid content of the raw material was measured via acid value determination. Acid value was determined by a standard acid base titration method (IP-1/58) where a standard solution of 1M KOH was used. Due to low free fatty acid (Less than 5% FFA), the karanja oil was processed with Base-catalyzed transesterification [2]. Transesterification process converted karanja oil into biodiesel and glycerol using 1% w/w NaOH as alkaline catalyst at 60-65^oC. After purification, the various properties of the produced biodiesel were determined by several ISO standard methods [19][20].

III. Results and Discussion

Transesterification Process Optimization:

Effect of change of molar ratio of limiting reactants (methanol)

i) Biodiesel production in small scale

Transesterification was carried out in small scale with the help of 20 ml measured small scale tube with stirrer. The amount of catalyst (NaOH) was kept fixed 1% of Karanja oil.

Table. 1. The effect of variation of oil to methanol ratio on product yield

Exp. no.	Wt. of methanol (mg)	Wt. of Karanja oil (mg)	Wt. of catalyst (%)	Oil to methanol ratio	% Yield
Exp. no-1	163	970	1	6:1	64
Exp. no-2	145	995		7:1	71
Exp. no-3	124	987		8:1	74
Exp. no-4	110	988		9:1	85
Exp. no-5	102	995		10:1	80
Exp. no-6	91	992		11:1	77

From the Table-1, it was found that with the increase of molar ratio, the yield of biodiesel increased up to 85%, when molar ratio was 9:1. Again with the increase of

molar ratio, the yield decreased. Catalyst (NaOH) was kept fixed 1% of karanja (*Pongamia pinnata*) oil for above experiments to get optimum yield.

ii) Biodiesel production in large scale**Table 2. The effect of variation karanja oil to methanol ratio on product yield**

Experiment No:	Wt. of methanol (g)	Wt. of karanja oil (g)	Wt. of catalyst (%)	Oil to methanol ratio	% Yield
No-1	16.58	100	1	6:1	66
No-2	14.30	100		7:1	71
No-3	12.50	100		8:1	79
No-4	11.12	100		9:1	86
No-5	10.00	100		10:1	81
No-6	9.10	100		11:1	78

From the Table-2, it was found that with the increase of molar ratio of Karanja oil to methanol, the yield biodiesel increase up to 86%, when molar ratio was 9:1. Again with

the increase of molar ratio, the yield decrease. Catalyst (NaOH) was kept fixed 1% of karanja oil for above experiments to get optimum yield.

Effect of change of catalyst concentration**i) Biodiesel production in small scale****Table 3. Variation of catalyst concentration with constant wt. of oil and methanol**

Exp no.	Wt. of methanol(mg)	Wt. of Karanja oil (mg)	Wt. of catalyst (%)	% Yield
Exp. no-1	112	1000	0.5	40
Exp. no-2		1000	0.8	68
Exp. no-3		1000	1.0	82
Exp. no-4		1000	1.2	78
Exp. no-5		1000	1.4	45
Exp. no-6		1000	1.6	20

From the Table-3, it was found that with the increase of catalyst concentration, yield of biodiesel increase up to 82%, when wt. of catalyst 1% of Karanja oil. Again with

the increase of catalyst concentration, the yield decreased. Methanol was kept fixed. Molar ratio of karanja oil to methanol was 9:1

ii) Biodiesel production in large scale**Table 4. Variation of catalyst concentration with constant wt. of oil and methanol.**

Experiment No.	Wt. of methanol(g)	Wt. of Karanja oil (g)	Wt. of catalyst (%)	% Yield
No-1	11.2	100	0.5	40
No-2		100	0.8	74
No-3		100	1.0	81
No-4		100	1.2	76
No-5		100	1.5	65
No-6		100	1.6	25

From the Table-4, it is found that with the increase of catalyst concentration, the yield biodiesel increased up to 81%, when wt. of catalyst 1% of karanja oil. Again with the increase of catalyst concentration, the yield decreased.

Methanol was kept fixed. Molar ratio of karanja oil to methanol was 9:1 for above experiments.

Thus, the optimum condition for the production of biodiesel from karanja oil are-

Molar ratio of biodiesel to methanol is 9:1 and amount of catalyst (NaOH) concentration is 1% of the oil.

Properties of biodiesel

The properties of the produced biodiesel that were determined are presented in the following (Table-5) in comparison with the commercial diesel.

Table 5. Comparison of obtained biodiesel & commercial diesel [19] [20].

Name of the analysis	Method	Biodiesel	Commercial diesel
Density at 15 ^o C	IP-160/57	0.875	0.8445
Kinematic viscosity @40 ^o C, cSt	D 445-65	38.53	6.06
Pour point, ^o C	D 97-57	-4	-2
Flash point, ^o C	D 93-62	158	70
Acid value, mg KOH/g	IP-1/58	0.423	0.34
Sulfur content, %mass	D 129-64	0.024	0.905
Cetane no.	D 613-86	58.22	51
Water content, %	IP-74/57	Trace Amount	Zero
Carbon residue, %	D 189-65	0.39	-
Ash content, %	D 482-63	0.003	-

Co-ignition characteristics test of karanja oil diesel with commercial diesel

Diesel oil was collected from local market and co-ignition characteristics [14] was observed using different ratio with karanja oil derived biodiesel. Results of

different experiments of co-ignition are shown in the Table-6. It was found that diesel engine run more smoothly in the ratio of commercial diesel to biodiesel 7:3 and gives best engine performance.

Table 6. Co-ignition characteristics of karanja oil derived biodiesel with commercial diesel

Type	Ratio	Duration, min	Load Applied(KW)	Observation
Conventional diesel to karanja oil biodiesel	9:1	12 mins	2130	Running smoothly
Conventional diesel to karanja biodiesel	8:2	11 mins	2130	Running smoothly
Conventional diesel to karanja oil biodiesel	7:3	12 mins 30 sec	2130	Running more smoothly.
Conventional diesel to karanja oil biodiesel	6:4	10 mins 25 sec	2130	Running smoothly
Conventional diesel to karanja oil biodiesel	5:5	9 mins 32 sec	2130	Running smoothly
Conventional diesel	100%	11 mins 28 sec	2130	Running smoothly
karanja oil biodiesel	100%	8 mins10 sec	2130	Running smoothly with bad smell

IV. Conclusion

In this research work, biodiesel was produced from waste karanja oil. Co-ignition characteristics of karanja oil derived biodiesel with commercial diesel were observed. Diesel engine runs more smoothly in the ratio of commercial diesel to karanja oil biodiesel was 7:3. The properties of the produced biodiesel have been studied and were compared with the commercial diesel and found to be reasonable. The properties of produced biodiesel were comparable to that of commercial diesel and it can be used as substitute of petro diesel to save foreign

exchange and control environmental pollutions to a some extent.

Acknowledgements

The research work was carried out in cooperation with Institute of Fuel Research and Development (IFRD), Bangladesh Council of Scientific & Industrial Research (BCSIR), Dhaka-1205, Bangladesh. The authors are grateful to all the officers and staffs of IFRD for their cordial help and support throughout the works.

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