

Energy Sector Development under Low Growth Conditions

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Nine years have already passed since the outbreak of the first oil crisis in 1973. The present article tries to explain, both in figures and in diagrams, what actual developments have taken place during the period in the fields of energy-saving and substitution of oil with other energy sources. First of all, Japan's oil imports have recorded some 20 per cent decline during the period, while great strides have been recorded in energy-saving technologies in many industries. The iron & steel industry, for example, has come up with a variety of new energy-saving equipment and technologies, including the dry-type cokes-burning equipment, the blast furnace pressure power generation facilities, the converter gas collection equipment and the continuous casting process. The electric power industry, on the other hand, has steadily replaced oil as a fuel with atomic power and LNG etc.

In sharp contrast to the industrial sector, the use of energy in the household sector has been steadily increasing. However, the shares of kerosene and coal in the total energy consumption at home have been dwindling, while that of electric power has been expanding. Energy-saving features of home-use electric appliances also have been proliferating.

In the meantime, the Sunshine Project, a national energysaving program spearheaded by the Ministry of International Trade & Industry, has been launched with specific research projects already in swing on several important themes.