AIR TURBINES RISING GLOBAL ENERGY DEMAND

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ABSTRACT

The rapid rise in global energy demand, driven by population growth, industrialization, and urbanization, has intensified the need for sustainable and renewable energy sources. Among the various alternatives to fossil fuels, air turbines—especially those harnessing wind energy—have emerged as a promising solution to meet future energy needs while mitigating environmental impacts. This paper explores the role of air turbines in addressing the escalating global energy crisis, analyzing their efficiency, scalability, and environmental benefits. It also examines recent technological advancements, economic viability, and integration challenges within existing energy infrastructures. With the global shift towards decarbonization, air turbines represent a critical component in the transition to a cleaner, more sustainable energy landscape. The study concludes that strategic investments, supportive policies, and continued innovation in air turbine technology will be essential to leverage their full potential in meeting the growing energy demands of the 21st century.

Key Words: Turbines, decarbonisation, sustainable, Innovation,advancements

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background on Air Turbines Rising Global Energy Demand

Due to factors including industrialization, urbanization, population increase, and the growing use of technology in all facets of life, the world's energy demand has been steadily rising. The International Energy Agency (IEA) projects that, under current policy scenarios, global energy demand will increase by more than 25% by 2040. This increase in demand is caused by:

By 2050, it is anticipated that there will be close to 10 billion people on the planet, with developing nations accounting for the majority of this growth.

The requirement for energy for consumer electronics, housing, transportation, and food production increases with population growth.

As developing nations industrialize quickly, their per capita energy consumption rises. As infrastructure, manufacturing, and service sectors expand, countries like China, India, and many in Sub-Saharan Africa see notable increases in energy consumption.

Nearly 70% of the world's population is predicted to reside in cities by 2050.

Cities need a lot of energy for water supply systems, lighting, heating, cooling, and transportation.[7]

1.1.4 Development of Technology

The demand for energy is increasing due to the growing use of data centers, electric vehicles (Evs), industrial automation, and electronic devices.

Base load power requirements are increased by the emergence of digital economies and Internet-of-things (IoT) technology.[5]

In an effort to lessen dependency on fossil fuels, the electrification of heating, cooking, and transportation is accelerating.

Although this change is good for the environment, it raises the demand for electricity overall.

Increased emissions: Growing demand may exacerbate climate change if renewable energy sources are not used. Risks to energy security: Reliance on fossil fuels may result in supply vulnerabilities and global unrest.

Infrastructure strain: If current grids are unable to meet demand, significant investments in smart grids and storage may be necessary.[3]

Air turbines, solar panels, and other renewable technologies need to be scaled up in order to sustainably supply this rising energy demand. Particularly, air turbines present a special chance for distributed, sustainable energy production in both natural and manufactured airflows (such as exhausts and ventilation systems).

Clean and renewable energy solutions are desperately needed because of the growing demand for energy and the negative environmental effects of using fossil fuels. In addition to being limited, conventional energy sources like coal, oil, and natural gas are also significant causes of air pollution, greenhouse gas emissions, and climate change. Transitioning to renewable energy systems globally is crucial for ensuring long-term energy security and environmental sustainability.

The world's biggest source of CO2 emissions is the burning of fossil fuels.

Renewable energy sources, such as air, solar, hydro, and air turbines, are essential for preventing the rise in global temperatures because they produce little to no greenhouse gases when in use.[11]

The depletion of non-renewable resources is speeding up. In contrast, renewable sources are virtually limitless and naturally replenished.

Due to their reliance on imported fossil fuels, many nations are susceptible to geopolitical threats and market volatility.

Domestic production of renewable energy improves national energy security and lessens reliance on imports. The production of renewable energy minimizes air and water pollution, which in turn lowers health concerns such as water contamination and respiratory illnesses. Renewable energy sources cause less ecological disturbance than the extraction of fossil fuels. Job Creation and Economic Development Compared to fossil fuels, the renewable energy sector employs more people and generates more jobs per unit of energy produced. Infrastructure investments in renewable energy stimulate innovation and local economies [13]. International agreements like the Paris Agreement push countries to switch to renewable energy sources and lessen their carbon footprints. To hasten the adoption of renewable energy, numerous countries provide subsidies and incentives. Importance in Energy Generation The growing demand for clean, renewable energy sources has elevated the importance of air turbines. They offer several advantages: Zero emissions: As air is the working fluid, there are no combustion by-products. Versatility: Air turbines can be used in CAES, WECs, and even hybrid Air-energy systems. Simplicity: With fewer moving parts and lower operating temperatures, they require less maintenance than conventional turbines. Energy storage integration: They are critical components in systems that store excess renewable energy (e.g., from solar or Air) and release it when demand increases.Air turbines are particularly effective in locations where environmental constraints make other energy systems impractical. Their use in off-grid power systems and remote islands is growing due to their lightweight, scalable design, and renewable nature.[22]

The need to find alternative and renewable energy sources has arisen due to the increasing demand for electrical energy for household and industrial use, the depletion of fossil fuel supplies, and the associated environmental consequences. As a result, conventional electric power systems are progressively incorporating renewable energy sources like solar, air, small-scale hydro, and ocean energy. Air technology has become the undisputed leader among renewable energy sources in terms of installed capacity.

A growing portion of the energy sent to the electrical grid comes from air energy. In 2008, electricity generation from renewable energy sources made up 16.6% of the EU27's (European Union 27 member states) gross electricity consumption; by 2010, that percentage had risen to 19.9% [1], [2]. This information is provided by Eurostat, the EU's statistics office. According to a European Commission report, if present growth rates are maintained, renewable energy sources might supply up to half of the EU's power by 2020 [1]. One of the main renewable energy sources causing this increasing rate is air energy. According to the research in [1], air power surpassed the EU's 2010 target of 40GW by more than 80% in 2009, with a total installed capacity of y of 74GW. The total installed air power capacity reached 84GW by the end of 2010 [3], more than doubling the initial goal. In fact, the installed air power capacity has been growing at an average annual growth rate of 27% since 2004; by the end of 2010, the global installed air power capacity had reached 197GW.Additionally, new ideas with greater capacity and higher air power extraction have been made possible by advancements in air technology, especially offshore air turbines. As a result, the cost of producing electricity from air is now lower than that of other renewable energy sources and about equal to that of other conventional sources.

However, the development of big (utility scale) air turbines, which are installed in air farms, is primarily responsible for this remarkable expansion. Conversely, the development of small air turbines has not been progressing at such a remarkable pace. A comparison of the expansion of installed large and small air turbines worldwide is presented in Table 1.1. The average growth of small air turbines was 8.7%, whereas the average growth of large air turbines installed worldwide was 28.1%. The growth indicates a persistent market move towards larger grid-connected systems, even among small air turbines. Only 7.6MW of off-grid installations remained in 2009, with 34.4MW of small air turbines sold worldwide being grid-connected, or 82% of the market.

Despite the high demand for tiny air turbines, the market is still unstable since government subsidies continue to play a major role in both production and sales. As part of their efforts to stop the ongoing release of CO2 into the atmosphere, governments still offer incentives for tiny air turbines. Additionally, a niche market for on-grid and off-grid applications, including the built environment, hybrid solutions for telecom base stations, battery charging, water pumping, and rural electrification, can benefit greatly from small air turbines.

The possibility for domestic jobs associated with the production, installation, and sale of tiny air turbines is an additional economic benefit. Due to the vast number of units produced each year, there is more employment created per installed MW of tiny air turbines than there are for large utility-scale air turbines [5, 6]. It takes more work to deploy air in smaller increments per unit of power generated [5]. Actually, compared to other power generation resources, tiny air generates more jobs per unit of installed capacity [5]. This can raise the price of tiny air turbines per MW installed. However, a possible drop in labor costs in underdeveloped nations could make up for this.

1.2 Miniature wind turbines in rural regions

Off-grid systems are self-sufficient, isolated systems that are typically situated in rural regions that are remote from the current grid. According to Table 1.2, an estimated 1.3 billion people, primarily in rural parts of developing nations, do not currently have access to electricity. Since there is a sizable untapped market in places with limited electrification, Small Air can play a significant role.

Typically, grid extension or diesel-powered electricity are used to electrify such locations generators. In most situations, grid extension may not be a feasible option due to the dispersed and low population density of the settlements, as the anticipated revenue is frequently insufficient to support the significant capital investment. However, because of the great distances and frequently challenging terrain that must be traversed to bring fuel on site, diesel-powered systems are expensive to operate. This frequently causes such a system to fail because it becomes economically unsustainable; recent spikes in the price of oil further emphasize this point.

1.2.1Definition of the problem

The usage of small air turbines is not common in many rural areas of developing nations, despite its enormous potential. The persistent poor penetration in these regions, which have been found to have the biggest potential for tiny air turbines, can be attributed to a number of factors.

Research is required to overcome these identified issues in order to make small air turbines appealing to underdeveloped nations. This study aims to address these issues by concentrating on the generator, a crucial part of small air turbines that transforms the mechanical energy of the turbine into electrical energy.

1.2.2 The price of tiny air turbines

Currently, standalone small air turbines range in price from €2,500 to €6,000 per installed kW, whereas large air turbines cost €1,500/kW [8]. This expense makes the technology an unappealing choice for those who reside in rural parts of underdeveloped nations. In contrast, less than 3% of this sum can be used to purchase an inexpensive gasoline-powered generator. Additionally, the cost of importing turbine components is very high, which raises the selling price considerably. Spare parts must also be imported in case the system breaks down.

1.2.3 Small air turbine maintenance

Despite being high-tech devices, small air turbines are difficult to maintain and run.

Such systems need to be maintained and repaired, which calls for strong technical abilities that are frequently absent in rural areas. Therefore, the additional difficulty of transporting skilled workers over long distances to carry out normal maintenance is present when building a small air turbine in a rural area. Additionally, the system can need to be replaced if certain parts need to be prolonged shutdown to find replacement parts, which lowers its dependability and availability [1].

1.2.4 Financial Mechanisms for Air Energy Development in India

Air energy projects, like all renewable energy ventures, require substantial capital investment upfront but offer long-term cost savings and environmental benefits. To make air energy (air turbines) financially viable and attractive to investors, the Indian government and financial institutions have introduced several financial mechanisms and policy instruments Here's a structured overview of the key financial mechanisms enabling the growth of air energy in India:

1.2.5 Government Incentives and Subsidies

- Generation-Based Incentive (GBI) o Purpose: Encourages actual electricity generation rather than just capacity installation.

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  - o Mechanism: Air power producers are provided a performance-based incentive (e.g, ₹0.50/kWh for a specified period), over and above the power purchase price.
  - o Status: Phased out for new projects but played a key role in earlier capacity additions.
- Accelerated Depreciation (AD)
- Benefit to Investors: Allows air energy investors (especially private companies) to depreciate 40–80% of the capital cost in the first year.
- Impact: Reduces taxable income, making air projects financially attractive.
- Use Case: Popular among industries investing in captive power generation using air turbines.

1.2.7 Capital Subsidies

- o Though largely phased out for large-scale projects, state-specific capital subsidies still exist forsmall air turbine installations and off-grid applications, especially in rural or remote areas.

1.2.8 Tariff-Based Mechanisms

- Feed-in Tariffs (FiT) o Earlier Approach: Fixed tariffs set by State Electricity Regulatory Commissions (SERCs) provided guaranteed returns over a long-term power purchase agreement (typically 20–25 years).

Impact: Encouraged early investment in the air sector.

Current Status: Being replaced by competitive bidding to promote market-driven pricing. 1.9.4 Reverse Auctions (Competitive Bidding)

Current Mechanism: o Developers bid to sell air power at the lowest possible tariff. The lowest bidder wins the project.

Advantages: o Transparent and competitive o Drives down tariffs

Concerns:

Extremely low bids can compromise project quality or financial sustainability ifnot backed by proper due diligence.

1.3.1 Power Purchase Agreements (PPAs)

Definition: Long-term contracts between air power producers and power distribution companies (DISCOMs) or private buyers.

Importance: Ensures revenue stability and reduces investment risk. Essential for securing project financing from banks and investors. Challenges: In some states, DISCOMs have delayed payments or renegotiated PPAs, causing uncertainty in the sector.Government efforts are ongoing to streamline PPA enforcement and reduce off-taker risk. 1.9.6 Green Energy Corridor and Transmission Support Objective: Develop dedicated transmission lines for renewable energy, including air, to ensure efficient power evacuation and reduce curtailment. Funding: Supported by the Indian government, Power Grid Corporation of India, and international partners like KfW (Germany) and the World Bank. Financial Impact:Reduces transmission bottlenecks, increasing bankability of air projects. 1.10 International and Multilateral Financing 1.10.1 Climate Finance and Development Banks Sources: o World Bank o Asian Development Bank (ADB) o International Finance Corporation (IFC) o Green Climate Fund (GCF) Support Types: o Low-interest loans Risk guarantees o Technical assistance

Example: IFC-financed air projects in Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh have helped demonstrate the viability of utility-scale air farms in India.

1.3.2 Bilateral Funding

Countries such as Germany (via GIZ/KfW) and Japan (via JICA) have offered concessional loans and support for renewable energy infrastructure, including offshore air. Renewable Energy Certificates (RECs) What They Are: Tradable certificates representing the environmental attributes of 1 MWh of renewable electricity.Mechanism: o Air power producers can sell RECs on power exchanges. Obligated entities (e.g., DISCOMs) can purchase RECs to meet Renewable Purchase Obligations (RPOs) Advantage: Provides an alternative revenue stream, especially when selling power under low-tariff PPAs.GreenBonds: Debt instruments raised to fund renewable energy projects. Indian banks and financial institutions (like IREDA) issue green bonds, which are also subscribed to by global investors. ESG Funds: Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) investing is gaining traction, with a focus on funding clean energy projects like air. Advantages: o Lower interest rates o Access to global sustainable finance markets.

State-Specific Financial Mechanisms : States like Tamil Nadu, Gujarat, and Karnataka offer state-specific benefits such as:Wheeling & Banking facilities ,Exemptions on open access charges ,Deemed generation benefits (compensation in case of curtailment)

Scope and Objectives of the Study: This thesis focuses on the design, analysis, and optimization of air turbines for renewable energy applications. The primary scope includes:Investigating the different types and configurations of air turbines, including impulse and reaction types. Designing a prototype air turbine with emphasis on aerodynamic efficiency.Performing Computational Fluid Dynamics (CFD) analysis to optimize blade geometry and flow characteristics.Experimentally validating performance using a laboratory-scale test rig..Evaluating the feasibility of integrating air turbines into wave energy converters and compressed air energy storage systems.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The goal of the research compiled in this thesis is to create affordable generators that are appropriate for small air turbine applications. To make small air turbines a desirable alternative for distant regions of poor nations—which are seen to have the most potential for such systems—a low-cost generator solution is required.

In order to achieve this goal, this thesis tackled three main issues that were shown to be the cause of the persistently low uptake of tiny air turbines in developing nations:

1. Present systems' high cost;
2. Systems' maintainability;
3. Low air speed operation and energy yield.

In order to emphasize issues 1) and 2), this chapter examined a few renewable energy projects and determined that the high cost of systems and a lack of maintenance expertise were the main causes of projects' failure in developing nations.

Problem 3 was brought to light by analyzing the energy output and cost performance of commercially available devices in low air speed zones.

A technique to determine the turbine's coefficient of performance was suggested in order to achieve good match because of the significant differences between the energy yield that the manufacturers anticipated and the test.

Chapter 4 suggested manufacturing generating systems in a small workshop as a solution to the high cost and maintainability of systems. A comparison of a few chosen generator configurations' manufacturing costs and manufacturability was shown. The chapter focus was restricted to the generator found in small air turbines .

4. A prototype generator's design, production, and operation utilizing the setup that offers the best manufacturing feasibility and the least the manufacturing cost as suggested. Low-cost capabilities and generator manufacturability were demonstrated. The performance of the prototype generator and the impact of design decisions on generator performance were shown by the measurement data.

Automotive claw pole alternators are used to save costs and improve maintainability. This idea was also put out to address the issue of material availability, which is a significant constraint on the generator prototype that was constructed. It was shown that this generator may be used in air. This system's energy yield was compared to that of manufactured generators and other systems that were previously discussed This chapter offers recommendations for further research as well as conclusions derived from the work included in this chapter.

This part presents the findings regarding the issues and obstacles that have been found to hinder the deployment of small air turbines and renewable energy systems in poor nations, as well as how each issue was resolved. It emphasized the causes of renewable energy systems' failure in poor nations as well as the consequences of small air turbines operating at low air speeds.

Here are several high-quality references about wind / “air turbine” potential in meeting rising global energy demand, plus some points & figures. I can pull together a full bibliography or more recent papers if needed.

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   "2023 was a record year for wind installations as world ramps up clean energy," Global Wind Energy Council report. ([AP News][6])
   "Wind - IEA" — updates for 2023 capacity additions, regional highlights etc. ([International Energy Agency][7])
   Data / Points

* Global wind power generation increased by 14% in 2022, adding ~265 TWh. ([admin.iea.org][2])
* The IRENA-data shows installed global wind (onshore + offshore) capacity has grown substantially: e.g., from ~7.5 GW in 1997 to over 1,100 GW by 2024. ([irena.org][3])
* LCOE (levelized cost) of onshore wind fell ~70% between 2010 and 2023; offshore wind fell ~63% in that period. ([irena.org][3])
* Theoretical potentials are very large: one study suggests ~80 TW could be harvested from land + coastal ocean, even after accounting for turbine-induced wind speed reductions. ([engineering.stanford.edu][1])
* Material demands (steel, rare earths, cement) will also scale significantly; these are important constraints. ([Science Direct][4])

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